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IN

AMERICAN LITERATURE,

HISTORY AND FICTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YEMASSEE," "LIFE OF MARION," "HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA,"
"RICHARD HURDIS," &c., &c.

FIRST SERIES.

NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

1845.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1845, by
W. GILMORE SIMMS,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

C. A. Alvord, Printer,
Cor. John and Dutch Sts.

T. B. Smith, Stereotyper,
216 William Street.

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1845

TO

PROFESSOR E. GEDDINGS,

OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

I HAD placed your name, my dear Geddings, in one of the first pages of a favourite study in fiction which I have in hand—the scene of which, on our own Ashley, is very dear to us both;—but it may be some time before this task is finished, and I prefer not to lose the present opportunity of saying to you, how very much, and how faithfully, I am your friend,

THE AUTHOR.

New York, Oct. 1, 1845.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE papers contained in the two volumes, of which the present is the first instalment, are drawn from numerous contributions which have been made to the periodical literature of the country in the last fifteen years. They are taken from the pages of the Southern and American Quarterly Reviews; from the American Monthly and the Knickerbocker Magazines; from the Magnolia, Orion, Southern and Western Review, and from other publications of like character. I have detached them, with a single eye to their national objects and characteristics. They constitute a class, in themselves, illustrative of our history, our materials of art, the moral of our aims, and the true development of our genius. They appeal to the utilitarian, not less than to the person of taste. They aim at showing what may be done among us, and insist upon what we should do, in regard to the essential in our progress. I flatter myself that, dealing little in the commonplaces of these themes, I have ample authority in my own experience—which has been that of self-training throughout—for all that I declare and urge, however new or startling it may seem to those whose standards are in stereotypes which no revolutions of the world may disturb or decompose.

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VIEWS AND REVIEWS.

ARTICLE I.

AMERICANISM IN LITERATURE.

AMERICANISM IN LITERATURE: An Oration before the Phi Kappa and Demosthenean Societies of the University of Georgia, at Athens, August 8, 1844. By Alexander B. Meek, of Alabama. Charleston: Burges & James. 1844.

THIS is the right title. It indicates the becoming object of our aim. Americanism in our Literature is scarcely implied by the usual phraseology. American Literature seems to be a thing, certainly,—but it is not the thing exactly. To put Americanism in our letters, is to do a something much more important. The phrase has a peculiar signification which is worth our consideration. By a liberal extension of the courtesies of criticism, we are already in possession of a due amount of American authorship; but of such as is individual, and properly peculiar to ourselves, we cannot be said to enjoy much. Our writers are numerous—quite as many, perhaps, in proportion to our years, our circumstances and necessities, as might be looked for among any people. But, with very few exceptions, their writings might as well be European. They are European. The writers think after European models, draw their stimulus and provocation from European books, fashion themselves to European tastes, and look chiefly to the awards of European criticism. This is to denationalize the American mind. This is to enslave the national heart—to place ourselves at the mercy of the foreigner, and to yield all that is individual, in our character and hope, to the paralyzing influence of his will, and frequently hostile purposes.

There is a season, perhaps, when such a condition of dependance is natural enough in the history of every youthful nation. It is in the national infancy that such must be the case. The early labours of a newly established people, in all the intellectual arts, must necessarily be imitative. They advance, by regular steps, from the necessary to the intellectual—from the satisfaction of vulgar cravings, to a desire for the gratification of moral and spiritual tastes;—and, in this progress, they can only advance through the assistance of other nations. This condition is inevitable in the history of a people wanting in homogeneousness at first, and but recently segregated from their several patriarchal trees. Time must be allowed to such a people—time to combine—to exchange thoughts and sympathies—and to learn the difficult, but absolutely necessary duty, of working together, as a community, in harmonious and mutually relying action. Generations must pass away, and other generations take their places, before they shall utterly lose the impressions made upon their plastic infancy by arbitrary models—before they shall begin to look around them, and within themselves, for those characteristics which are peculiar to their condition, and which distinguish the country of their present fortunes. It is idle to say, as has been urged by the British Reviewers in their reply to Mr. Jefferson, that the Anglo-Americans were of full age at the very birth of their country. This is scarcely true, even in physical respects. They did not represent the intellect of the nation which they left, though they did its moral and its temperament. They represented neither its tastes, nor its acquisitions, nor its luxuries. The eminence upon which the superior characteristics of the British nation stood, had never been reached by the footsteps of the Pilgrims. They were in possession of the Anglo-Norman genius, no doubt—upon this it will be the duty of the American to insist;—but its great attainments—its cherished acquisitions—its tastes, its refinements, its polish, were not theirs. In all these essentials, the founders of the Anglo-American States were in their infancy. And so they were kept for a century, by the novel necessities, the trying hardships, the perilous wars which followed upon their new condition. The conquest of a savage empire—the conflict with barbarian enemies,—kept them back from the natural acquisitions,

which were due to their origin and genius. Great Britain herself is fairly chargeable, by her tyrannous exactions and the bloody wars with which she sought us out in the new homes so perilously won in the wilderness, with having withstood our people in their progress to the attainment of those objects the lack of which she this day makes our reproach.

But these excuses can be urged no longer, nor is it necessary that they should. Europe must cease to taunt us because of our prolonged servility to the imperious genius of the Old World. We must set ourselves free from the tyranny of this genius, and the time has come when we must do so. We have our own national mission to perform—a mission commensurate to the extent of our country,—its resources and possessions,—and the numerous nations, foreign and inferior, all about us, over whom we are required to extend our sway and guardianship. We are now equal to this sway and guardianship. The inferior necessities of our condition have been overcome. The national mind is now free to rise to the consideration of its superior wants and more elevated aims; and individuals, here and there, are starting out from the ranks of the multitude, ready and able to lead out, from the bondage of foreign guidance, the genius which, hitherto, because of its timidity, knew nothing of its own resources for flight and conquest.

If the time for this movement has not yet arrived, it is certainly very near at hand. This conviction grows out of the fact that we now daily taunt ourselves with our protracted servility to the European. We feel that we are still too humbly imitative, wanting in the courage to strike out boldly, hewing out from our own forests the paths which should lead us to their treasures, and from the giant masses around us the characteristic forms and aspects of native art. This reproach has been hitherto but too much deserved, qualified only by a reference to the circumstances in our condition at which we have been able to glance only for a moment. We have done little that may properly be called our own; and this failure, due to influences which still, in some degree, continue, is one which nothing but a high and stimulating sense of nationality will enable us to remedy. It is so easy, speaking the English language, to draw our inspiration from the mother

country, and to seek our audience in her halls and temples, that, but for the passionate appeals of patriotic censure, it may be yet long years before we throw off the patient servility of our dependance. With a daily influx of thousands from foreign shores, seeking to share our political securities and the blessings of the generous skies and rich soil which we possess, Europe sends us her thoughts, her fashions, and her tastes. These have their influence in keeping us in bondage, and we shall require all the activity of our native mind to resist the influence which she thus exercises upon our national institutions and education. Besides, our very wealth of territory, and the ease with which we live, are obstacles in the way of our improvement. The temptations of our vast interior keep our society in a constant state of transition. The social disruptions occasioned by the wandering habits of the citizen, result invariably in moral loss to the whole. Standards of judgment fluctuate, sensibilities become blunted, principles impaired, with increasing insecurity at each additional remove; and this obstacle in the way of our literary progress must continue, until the great interior shall re-act, because of its own overflow, upon the Atlantic cities.

There is nothing really to distress us in this survey, unless,—either because of a supineness of character which is not our reproach in merely every-day pursuits, or because of an intrinsic deficiency of the higher intellectual resources,—we continue to yield ourselves to our European teachers. Our literature, so far, has been English in its character. We have briefly striven to show why. Glad are we that we can make some exceptions to this admission—that we can point, here and there throughout the country, to some individuals, and say, here stands a true scion of young America,—this is a plant of our own raising—true to the spirit of the country,—to its genuine heart—a man to represent and speak for the nature which we acknowledge, and of which time shall make us proud. In these instances we find our hope. It is thus that we feel ourselves encouraged to say to our people, and to the workers in the mind of Europe, that we too are making a beginning in a purely individual progress—evolving, however slowly, a national aim and idea, out of the fulness and overflow of the national heart. We are rejoiced to behold symp-

toms of this independent intellectual working, simultaneously, in remote regions of the country ; and flatter ourselves with the vision of a generous growth in art and letters, of which tokens begin to make themselves felt from the Arostook to the Rio Brave. This evidence needs but sympathy and encouragement to grow powerful, and to challenge a living rank among the great spirits of other lands and periods. As yet, perhaps, the shows are faint and feeble. Few of the hurrying multitude have leisure to behold them,—our progress declaring itself, as it now does, rather by its anxieties and cravings,—its discontents with itself, and its feverish impatience at the advance of other communities—than by its own proper performances. But such a condition of the popular mind is the precursor of performance. The wish to do, is the forerunner of the way. Let us only take something for granted. Let the nation but yield a day's faith to its own genius, and that day will suffice for triumph. We do not yet believe in ourselves,—unless in the meaner respects which prove our capacity for acquisition only in concerns the most inferior—in the mechanical arts,—in pursuits regarded as simply useful,—in selfish desires, and such as are necessary to our physical condition merely. This scepticism is the great barrier to be overcome. Our development depends upon our faith in what we are, and in our independence of foreign judgment. A resolute will, a bold aim, and a spirit that courageously looks within for its encouragements and standards,—these are our securities for intellectual independence. To these acquisitions our labours must be addressed. To the want of these, and the necessity for them, the attention of our people must be drawn. The popular mind scarcely yet seems to perceive that there is a vast and vital difference between the *self-speaking* among our people, and that numerous herd, which, though born, living and walking in our midst, speak never *for* our hearts, and seldom *from* their own—whose thoughts, no less than language, are wholly English, and who, in all general characteristics—so far as the native progress and development are effected—might as well have been born, dwelling and dilating in Middlesex or London. It is but to see these things as we should—to understand the world-wide difference between writing *for*, and writing *from* one's people. This difference is

the whole,—but *what* a difference! To write *from* a people, is to *write* a people—to make them live—to endow them with a life and a name—to preserve them with a history forever. Whether the poet shall frame his song according to custom, or according to the peculiar nature and the need of those for whom it is made, is, in other words, to ask whether he shall be a poet at all or not. It was by properly understanding this difference in ancient days that he grew into the stature of the poet, and won his reputation; and it was through the proper comprehension of this *difference* and this *duty*, on the part of the Poet, that the genius and the history of the great nations have survived all the political disasters which have bowed their pillars in the dust.

Up to the present day—the signs whereof encourage us with better hopes—the question might properly have been asked, how should objects, such as these, be to us of any consideration?—we who live not for the morrow but the day—whose plans are conceived for temporary not eternal refuge—who hurry forward as if we had no children, and who rear them as if we loved them not! Such is the profligacy of every people who show themselves indifferent to the developments of native art. It is by the exhibition of the constructive faculty that the intellectual nature of a people is distinguished. In proportion to the possession and exercise of this faculty, which embodies all the elements of the imagination, will be the moral rank of the nation. We have been very heedless of this matter. Our people have taken too little interest in the productions of the American mind, considered purely as American, whether in art or letters. In all that relates to the higher aims of the social and spiritual nature, England, and what she is pleased to give us, sufficiently satisfies our moral cravings. Yet we have an idea of independence in some respects which tends to show how wretchedly limited has been our ambition. Parties are formed among us to compel the manufacture of our own pots and kettles, our woollens and window glass; parties ready to revolutionize the country, and make all chaos again, if these things be not of our own making:—made too,—such is the peculiar excellence of the jest, at our own heavy cost and pecuniary injury;—but never a word is said, whether by good sense or patriotism, touching the grievous imposition upon us of foreign

opinion and foreign laws, foreign tastes and foreign appetites, taught us through the medium of a foreign, and perhaps hostile and insulting teacher. These, say these profound haberdashers in the wares of patriotism, are really matters of slight concern. Thoughts are common, say the paper manufacturers, and though we insist upon supplying the paper from domestic mills, upon which such thoughts are to be printed, yet these are quite as properly brought from abroad, as conceived and put in proper utterance at home. The European may as well do our thinking. The matter is not worth a struggle. English literature is good enough for us for many hundred years to come.* So, for that matter, are English woollens.

But this will not suffice. The question is one which concerns equally our duties and our pride. Are we to aim and arrive at all the essentials of nationality—to rise into first rank and position as a people—to lift our heads, unabashed, among the great communities of Europe—plant ourselves on the perfect eminence of a proud national will, and show ourselves not degenerate from the powerful and noble stocks from which we take our origin? This is a question not to be answered by the selfishness of the individual nature, unless it be in that generous sort of selfishness which is moved only by the highest promptings of ambition. It is an argument addressed to all that is hopeful and proud in the hearts of an ardent and growing people. It is not addressed to the tradesman but to the man. We take it for granted, that we are not—in the scornful language of the European press,—a mere nation of shop-keepers :†—that we have qualities of soul and ge-

* This language was actually employed by one of the American reviews of highest rank. Yet these reviews, themselves are anticipated by foreign criticism, as, in most cases, they expend their analysis, upon foreign publications. I have heard an American author speak with wholesale scorn of all American art, and an American painter, of superior distinction, declare that he never allowed himself to read an American book. Neither of these unfortunate persons seemed to perceive, that, in thus disparaging the native genius, they were effectually sealing their own condemnation.

† This language, originally applied by Napoleon to the English nation, at the very time when his highest ambition was to transfer to France a portion of that commerce upon which the great distinction and power of the rival country was built up,—has been transferred, by the latter, in a sense still more scornful, to our own. It is, perhaps, no bad sign of our successful progress as a nation, that our national enemy shows herself more angry with us than ever.

nius, which if not yet developed in our moral constitution, are struggling to make themselves heard and felt;—that we have a pride of character,—growing stronger (as we trust) with the progress of each succeeding day,—which makes us anxious to realize for ourselves that position of independence, in all other departments, which we have secured by arms and in politics. Mere political security—the fact that we drink freely of the air around us, and at our own choosing partake of the fruits of the earth—is not enough,—constitutes but a small portion of the triumphs, and the objects of a rational nature. Nay, even political security is temporary, always inferior if not wholly uncertain, unless it be firmly based upon the certain and constant vigilance of the intellectual moral. A nation, properly to boast itself, and to take and maintain its position with other States, must prove itself in possession of self-evolving attributes. Its character must be as individual as that of the noblest citizen that dwells within its limits. It must do its own thinking as well as its own fighting, for, as truly as all history has shown that the people who rely for their defence in battle upon foreign mercenaries inevitably become their prey, so the nation falls a victim to that genius of another, to which she passively defers. She must make, and not borrow or beg, her laws. Her institutions must grow out of her own condition and necessities, and not be arbitrarily framed upon those of other countries. Her poets and artists, to feel her wants, her hopes, her triumphs, must be born of the soil, and ardently devoted to its claims. To live, in fact, and secure the freedom of her children, a nation must live through them, in them, and by them,—by the strength of their arms, the purity of their morals, the vigour of their industry, and the wisdom of their minds. These are the essentials of a great nation, and no one of these qualities is perfectly available without the co-operation of the rest. And, as we adapt our warfare to the peculiarities of the country, and our industry to our climate, our resources and our soil, so the operations of the national mind must be suited to our characteristics. The genius of our people is required to declare itself after a fashion of its own—must be influenced by its skies, and by those natural objects which familiarly address themselves to the senses from boyhood, and colour the fancies, and urge the thoughts, and

shape the growing affections of the child to a something kindred with the things which he beholds. His whole soul must be imbued with sympathies caught from surrounding aspects within his infant horizon. The heart must be moulded to an intense appreciation of our woods and streams, our dense forests and deep swamps, our vast immeasurable mountains, our voluminous and tumbling waters. It must receive its higher moral tone from the exigencies of society, its traditions and its histories. Tutored at the knee of the grand-dame, the boy must grasp, as subjects of familiar and frequent consideration, the broken chronicles of senility, and shape them, as he grows older, into coherence and effect. He must learn to dwell often upon the narratives of the brave fathers who first broke ground in the wilderness, who fought or treated with the red men, and who, finally, girded themselves up for the great conflict with the imperious mother who had sent them forth. These histories, making vivid impressions upon the pliant fancies of childhood, are the source of those vigorous shoots, of thought and imagination, which make a nation proud of its sons in turn, and which save her from becoming a by-word and reproach to other nations. In this, and from such impressions, the simplest records of a domestic history, expand into the most ravishing treasures of romance. But upon this subject let us hearken to the writer of the eloquent discourse before us.

"Literature, in its essence, is a spiritual immortality; no more than religion a creation of man; but, like the human soul, while enduring the mystery of its incarnation, is subject to the action of the elements, is the slave of circumstance. In the sense in which we would now view it, it is the expression of the spiritual part of our nature, in its intellectual action, whether taking form in philosophy, history, poetry, eloquence, or some other branch of thought. The sum of all this, in any nation, is what constitutes her literature, and it is always modified and coloured by the peculiarities about it. As the river, sliding under the sunset, imbibes for the time, the hues of the heavens, so the stream of literature receives, from the people through which it passes, not only the images and shadows of their condition, but the very force and direction of its current. Every literature, Greek or Roman, Arabic or English, French, Persian or German, acquired its qualities and impression from the circumstances of the time and people. The philosophic eye can readily detect the key, cause and secret of each, and expose the seminal principle from which they grew into their particular shape and fashion. The same scrutinizing analysis will enable us to determine the influences among ourselves,

which are to operate in the formation of our literature; as well as to decide whether it will comport with those high spiritual requisitions which I have already avowed, should be demanded from it. Let us then attempt to see how Americanism will develope itself in Literature." pp. 11, 12.

There is something equally thoughtful and fanciful in the passage which follows. It betrays a mind as sensible to the picturesque, as it is searching and speculative. The writer proceeds to illustrate his proposition by glimpses of the physical material which our own country affords for the uses of the native poet.

"The physical attributes of our country are all partial to the loftiest manifestations of mind. Nature here presents her loveliest, sublimest aspects. For vastness of extent, grandeur of scenery, genial diversities of climate, and all that can minister to the comforts and tastes of man, this heritage of ours is without a parallel. In its mountains of stone and iron, its gigantic and far-reaching rivers, its inland seas, its forests of all woods, its picturesque and undulating prairies, in all its properties and proportions, it might well be considered, in comparison with the eastern hemisphere, the work of a more perfect and beneficent artist. To the eyes of the Genoese mariner, the wildest dreams of Diodorus and Plato were more than realized. Seneca sang,—

"——— Venient annis
Sæcula seris, quibus oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat tellus, Typhisque novos
Detegat orbes:"

Yet, not even in the mirror of his prophetic fancy were these more than Elysian fields glossed with all their beauty and sublimity. Even the bilious British satirist, who could see no good in all our institutions, was compelled to confess that here

"——— Nature showed
The last ascending footsteps of the God!"

Well nigh all this vast expanse of fruitfulness and beauty, too, has been subject to the control of civilized man. Our country has extended her jurisdiction over the fairest and most fertile regions. The rich bounty is poured into her lap, and breathes its influence upon her population. Their capacities are not pent and thwarted by the narrow limits which restrict the citizens of other countries. No speculative theorist, a Malthus, Stultz or Liceto, has cause here to apprehend the dangers of over-population. Room, bountiful room, is all about us, for humanity to breathe freely in, and to go on expanding in a long future. Do these things afford no promise of intellectual improvement? Are they no incitements to a lofty and expanded literature? Do they fur-

nish no *matériel* for active, generous, elevated thought? Is there no voice coming out from all this fragrance and beauty and sublimity, appealing to the heart and fancy of man, for sympathy, utterance, embodiment? Why, it was once said, that the sky of Attica would make a Bœotian a poet; and we have seen even 'the red old hills of Georgia' draw inspiring melody from the heart of patriotic genius. Physical causes have always operated in the formation and fashioning of literature. In all the higher productions of mind, ancient and modern, we can easily recognize the influence of the climate and natural objects among which they were developed. The sunsets of Italy coloured the songs of Tasso and Petrarch; the vine-embowered fields of beautiful France are visible in all the pictures of Rousseau and La Martine; you may hear the solemn rustling of the Hartz forest, and the shrill horn of the wild huntsman throughout the creations of Schiller and Goethe; the sweet streamlets and sunny lakes of England smile upon you from the graceful verses of Spenser and Wordsworth; and the mist-robed hills of Scotland loom out in magnificence through the pages of Ossian, and the loftier visions of Marmion and Waverly.

"Our country, then, must receive much of the character of her literature from her physical properties. If our minds are only original; if they be not base copyists, and servile echoes of foreign masters; if we can assert an intellectual as well as political independence; if we dare to think for ourselves, and faithfully picture forth, in our own styles of utterance, the impressions our minds shall receive from this great, fresh continent of beauty and sublimity; we can render to the world the most vigorous and picturesque literature it has ever beheld. Never had imagination nobler stimulants; never did nature look more encouragingly upon her genuine children. In poetry, romance, history and eloquence, what glorious objects, sights and sounds, for illustration and ornament! I have stood, down in Florida, beneath the over-arching groves of magnolia, orange and myrtle, blending their fair flowers and voluptuous fragrance, and opening long vistas between their slender shafts, to where the green waters of the Mexican Gulf lapsed upon the silver-sanded beach, flinging up their light spray into the crimson beams of the declining sun, and I have thought that, for poetic beauty, for delicate inspiration, the scene was as sweet as ever wooed the eyes of a Grecian minstrel on the slopes of Parnassus, or around the fountains of Castaly.

"Again: I have stood upon a lofty summit of the Alleghanies, among the splintered crags and vast gorges, where the eagle and the thunder make their home; and looked down upon an empire spread out in the long distance below. Far as the eye could reach, the broad forests swept away over territories of unexampled productiveness and beauty. At intervals, through the wide champaign, the domes and steeples of some fair town, which had sprung up with magical suddenness among the trees, would come out to the eye, giving evidence of the presence of a busy, thriving population. Winding away through the centre too, like a great artery of life to the scene, I could behold a noble branch of the Ohio, bearing upon its bosom the already active com-

merce of the region, and linking that spot with a thousand others, similar in their condition and character. As I thus stood, and thought of all that was being enacted in this glorious land of ours, and saw, in imagination, the stately centuries as they passed across the scene, diffusing wealth, prosperity and refinement, I could not but believe that it presented a nobler theatre, with sublimer accompaniments and inspirations, than ever rose upon the eye of a gazer from the summits of the Alps or the Appenines.

"Such are some of the physical aspects of our country, and such the influence they are destined to have upon our national mind. Very evidently they constitute noble sources of inspiration, illustration and description. For all that part of literature which is drawn from the phases of nature, from the varying moods and phenomena of the outward world, the elements and the seasons, they will be more valuable than all the beauties of the Troad or Campania Felix. Rightly used, they would bring a freshness and spirit into the domain of high thought, which would revive it like a spring-time return, and we might take up, in a better hope, the exultation of Virgil,—

> "Jam ultima ætas Cumali carmidis venit,
> Magnus ordo sœclorum nascitur abintegro,
> Et jam virgo redit, Saturnia regna redeunt!" pp. 12–17.

This is a long extract, but we have no apologies to make for it. Its pictures will interest, its grace, glow and eloquence, delight the reader, until he forgets its length. No one can question the fact that the scenery of a country has always entered largely into the inspiration of the native genius. The heart of the poet is apt to dwell frequently and fondly upon the regions on which the eyes of his youth first opened, with a rare acuteness of delight, even though these were wholly wanting in natural beauty and grossly barren of all the accessories of art. What then must be the effect upon the young genius where the scenery is beautiful or imposing in itself—distinguished by sweetness, grace and loveliness, or stirring deeper and sublimer sentiments by its wild and awe-compelling attributes. That our scenery has not yet found its painter on canvass or in fiction, is due to other than its own deficiencies. It must be our care to prove that it is not because the genius itself is not among us.

One remark may be offered here. In all probability, the merely descriptive poet will be among the latest productions of our land. Britain herself has not produced many poets of this order, nor do they rank, with the single exception of Thomson, among the very noble of her train. Bloomfield was a driveller,

and the rank of Somerville is low. The genius of the Anglo-Saxon would seem to be too earnest, too intensely moral in its objects, for the consideration of still life except as subordinate to the action. He puts it in his story, as the painter upon his canvas, as a sort of back-ground, and he usually hurries from this sort of painting to that which better tasks his more exacting powers. In this characteristic the genius of the American is naturally like,—with this difference, that the circumstances of his career tends still more to increase his love of action and his disregard of mere adjuncts and dependencies. He has an aim, and, eager in its attainment, he pauses not to see how lovely is the lake and valley—how vast the mountain—how wild the gorge, how impetuous the foaming rush of the unbridled waters. If he sees or feels, it is but for an instant,—and he is driven forward, even as the cataract beneath his gaze, by a power of which he is himself unconscious, and in a direction, the goal of which he is not permitted to behold. Our orator has already, adequately and sufficiently, instanced the various charms of scenery which our country possesses. These will make themselves felt in due season, when the national mind is permitted to pause in its career of conflict—for such is the nature of its progress now—for a survey of its conquests and itself. We pass, with him, to other considerations of still more importance, as essential to Americanism in our Letters. The extract which we make is brief:

"These pleasant anticipations are also justified in part, by the excellent and diversified character of the population of our country. Herein will reside one of the strong modifying influences of Americanism upon literature. Though our population is composed principally of the several varieties of the Anglo-Saxon stock, yet every other race of Europe, and some from the other continents, have contributed to swell the motley and singular combination. Coming from every quarter of the globe, they have brought with them their diverse manners, feelings, sentiments, and modes of thought, and fused them in the great American alembic. The stern, clear-headed, faith-abiding Puritan, the frank, chivalrous, imaginative Huguenot, the patient, deep-thoughted, contemplative German,—pilgrims from every clime, creed, and literature—are to be found in contact and intercourse here. They interact upon each other to fashion all the manifestations of society, in thought or deed. The contrasts and coincidences, they present under our institutions, afford new and graceful themes for the poet, the novelist and the philosopher; and the historian will have to give us pictures of life and humanity here, such as are found not elsewhere. I

need but allude, in this connection, to the existence of three distinct races of men upon our continent, with their strongly marked peculiarities of condition, colour and history. The immense rapidity with which our numbers are increasing—well nigh doubling in every fifteen years!—will produce an unexampled demand for knowledge, and act as a powerful impetus to its elevation. Already has the great and fluctuating intermixture of our population had an influence upon the English language. In no part of the world is our mother tongue spoken with such general purity of pronunciation as in our country. The constant tide of internal emigration tends to rectify the provincialisms into which stationary communities so frequently fall. Otherwise is it even in England. The whole kingdom is broken up into dialects as numerous as her counties; and the respective inhabitants are almost as unintelligible to each other, as if they spoke languages radically distinct. Is it Utopian to expect the proudest results, when one common language shall be employed by the many millions who are to occupy this almost illimitable republic?—But it is in the strong, industrious and wholesome character of our population, that the best hope for our national mind depends. Their habits of life will generate a *muscularity* of intellect, becoming their position and destiny. No effeminacy of thought or feeling will be tolerated among a people, composed of the choicest varieties of every race, stimulating each other to mental exertion, and accumulating wealth and power with almost miraculous rapidity and extent. Such a people, if they should have no powerful impediments, are better fitted than any other to render the world an intellectual illumination, and to bring round in reality the poetic vision of the golden age." pp. 17–19.

But the most imposing considerations arrayed by our author in this discussion, as indicative of the future resources of Americanism in our Literature, are to be found in those passages in which he considers the influence of our political institutions upon the mind of the country. It would afford us great pleasure did our limits suffice to give these passages, but we must content ourselves with a bare glance at their prominent suggestions. Mr. Meek justly draws our attention to the fact, that, of all the ancient tyrannies, but very few of them have contributed to the advancement of letters. He exhibits the baldness in literature of Chaldea, Babylon, Assyria and Phœnicia, and hurriedly compares their performances with the more glorious showings of the free states of the past. And he argues justly that this result is in the very nature of things;—that, as liberty of opinion is favourable to thought and provocative of discussion, so also must it favour the general development of intellect in all departments. The deduction is absolutely inevitable. Tyranny, on the other

hand, always trembling for its sceptre, and jealous of every antagonist influence, watches with sleepless solicitude to impose every fetter upon the free speech of orator and poet. It would seem almost impertinent to insist upon these points, were it not that there really exists among thinking men a considerable difference of opinion upon them, and this difference of opinion is the natural fruit of a too hasty glance only at the surfaces. The friends of aristocracy, lingering fondly over those bright but unfrequent pages in literary history, as associated with a despotism, which are adorned by the works of genius, hurriedly conclude that they are the issues of that despotism itself. They point with confidence to such periods as those of Augustus Cæsar and Leo the Tenth. The courtly sway of the one, and the magnificent ambition of the other, are sufficient to delude the imagination, and hurry the reason aside from a consideration of the true analysis. They overlook the important fact that, in all these cases, it has so happened that men of literary tastes were themselves the despots. It was not that the despotism was itself favourable to such persons, but that the despotism, wielded by a particular hand, was not unwilling to smile with indulgence upon the obsequious poet, and the flattering painter. It so happened that an absolute tyrant was yet possessed of some of the higher sensibilities of the intellectual nature, and had almost as strong a passion for letters and the arts, as for political dominion. Thus feeling, he rendered the one passion in some degree subservient to the other. If it could be shown that his tastes were transmitted with his robes, to his successor, there might be some reason in the faith which we are required to have in the benignant literary influences of such a government; but the sufficient fact that, in the histories of despotism, these brief and beautiful periods shine out alone, and rest like green spots, at remote stages, through a long and lamentable wilderness, would seem to conclude the question.

It was the wealth and taste of the despot that made him a patron, and not because he held the reins of government with a rigorous or easy hand. The peculiar sort of rule in Rome and Italy had no part in making the poet or historian; and, for the patronage itself, accorded by the despot, let the reader turn to the histories of denied and defrauded genius, and see what a scorned

and wretched beggar it has ever been in the courts of Aristocracy. Let him look to the history of Tasso for example—let him turn to that curious book of Benvenuto Cellini,—if he would see what sort of countenance is that which mere power is apt to bestow upon the labours of the man of letters or of art. Great wealth,—that of private persons—has done for them much more in every nation. Spenser owed much more to Sydney, and Shakspeare to Southampton, than either of them ever owed to Elizabeth. We need not multiply examples. The man of genius, in all departments, has achieved his triumphs rather in despite and defiance of despotism than because of its benign and genial atmosphere. The true patron of letters is the lover of them, and where are these persons likely to be more numerous, than in regions where the great body of the people are lifted by the political institutions of the country into a responsibility which tasks the intellect, and requires a certain amount of knowledge in every department. The despotism is apt to absorb in itself all the taste and intellect where it governs. Democracy naturally diffuses them. At first, the diffusion would seem to lessen the amount of the whole,—to subtract from its spirit—reduce its volume, and, by too minute division of its parts, to render it feeble and inert for active purposes. But the constant attrition of rival minds in a country where the great body of the people are forced into consideration, strengthens and informs, with a peculiar and quickening vigour, each several share of that capacity with which the genius of the nation was at first endowed. The genius of the nation does not the less act together, because it acts through many rather than through one; and, by insensible transitions, the whole multitude rise to the same elevated platform, upon which, at the beginning, we may have beheld but one leading mind, and that, possibly, borrowed from a rival nation. It is a wondrous impulse to the individual, to his hope, his exertions and his final success, to be taught that there is nothing in his way, in the nature of the society in which he lives;—that he is not to be denied because of his birth or poverty, because of his wealth or his family;—that he stands fair with his comrades, on the same great arena,—with no social if no natural impediments,—and that the prize is always certain for the fleetest in the race.

This must be the natural influence of the democratic principle upon the minds of a people by whose political institutions its supremacy is recognized. Let no man deceive himself by a glance confined only to the actual condition of things around him. No doubt that, in the beginning of a democracy, in that first wild transition state, which follows upon the overthrow of favourite and long acknowledged authorities, art and literature, alarmed at the coil and clamour, will shroud themselves in their cells, venturing abroad only in those dim hours of dusk and twilight, in which a comparative silence promises comparative security. But this is also the history of nearly all the arts of peace. Commerce and trade, mechanical and mercantile adventure, show themselves nearly equally timid. True, they are the first to recover from their panic, but this is solely because they belong to the more servile and earthly necessities of our nature. They are followed by the gradual steps of art and science, and these in turn by the lovelier and gentler offspring of united grace and muse. It is the error of persons of taste that, shrinking themselves from the uproar of this transition period, they regard its effects as likely to continue, as being not temporary only, and as destined to perpetuate the commotion which, in our notion, is nothing more than that natural outbreak of elements in the moral, which, in the natural world, almost always harbingers a clear sky and pure, salubrious and settled weather. Such, when the time comes,—when the first rude necessities of a new condition are pacified, and the machine begins to turn evenly and smoothly upon its axis,—such will be the working of democracy. This is not less our faith than our hope. The natural conclusions of reason lead us directly to this confidence, even if the history of the past did not afford us sufficient guaranties for the future.

Our orator next instances, with effect, the wholesome influences in our government of the "let alone" principle. This, by the way, is an important matter to be understood. Democracy goes into society, with scarcely any farther desire than that men should be protected from one another—left free to the pursuit of happiness, each in the form and manner most agreeable to himself, so long as he does not trespass upon a solitary right of his neighbour. This is the principle. We do not tolerate any inter-

ference of government with those employments of its citizens which violate none of the rights of others, and which do not offend against the sense of a christian country. To protect or to disparage that occupation of the individual or the community, which, in itself, is regarded as legitimate, is a power which, according to our construction of the social contract in America, is wholly unwarranted by our laws. Something is due certainly to the necessities of the whole; but, for the "general welfare" principle, we insist that the "general necessity and exigency" is the true standard by which we impose restraints, or hold out encouragements. Mr. Meek properly insists upon the value of this "let alone" practice, on the part of government, as vastly promotive of the interests of literature; and particularly dwells upon the advantages, in this regard, which grow out of our system of confederated sovereignties. The very inequalities of things in moral respects, in employments, in climate, soil and circumstance, which we find in these severalties, is at once calculated to provoke the mind in each to exertion, and to endow it with originality. There is none of that even tenour of aspect, in the genius of the country, which somewhat monotonously distinguishes an empire the whole energies of which spring from centralization. A natural rivalry and emulation are the consequence of a form of political independence, which, in all domestic subjects, leaves us utterly free to our own pursuits. We watch the progress of our neighbour, and strive rather to surpass than to follow. There is none of that servile, blind adhesion to a superior, which, in Europe, invariably brings the popular intellect, even in the most remote dependencies of the nation, to the beaten tracks which conduct them to the centre. The very divergencies of our paths are favourable to the boldness, the freedom and the flights of the national intellect. We make our own paths—we trace out our own progress—and, just in due degree as we turn aside from the dictation of those great cities, which, among us, are more immediately allied with the marts of Europe, so do we discover marks of the most certain freshness and originality, though coupled with rudeness and irregularity—a harshness which offends and a wildness which, we are encouraged to believe, it is not beyond the power of time and training to subdue to equable and noble exercises. To any one

who looks into the character of our people,—who passes below the surface, and sees in what way the great popular heart beats in the several States of the confederacy,—with what calm, consistent resolve in some—with what impatient heat in others—how cold but how clear in this region,—how fiery, but how clouded in that;—there will be ample promise for the future, not only in the value of the material, but in its exquisite and rich variety. And, even on the surface, how these varieties speak out for themselves, so that it shall not be difficult for a shrewd observer of men to distinguish at a glance, and to declare from what quarter of America the stranger comes,—whether from the banks of the Charles or the Hudson, the Savannah or the Mississippi.

Our orator justly reminds us, while treating of this part of his subject, that, by our compact, the interests of education and literature are left entirely in the control of the States. This vital matter is in our own hands, and nothing but our lachesse or our wilfulness, can possibly lose us the power of moulding the temper of our people in due compliance with our peculiar circumstances, whether moral or physical. We may make our literature what we please if we do not neglect the interests of education. We should confer upon it all the becoming characteristics of our section—our social sympathies, our political temper, and those moral hues and forms which the intellectual nature so happily imbibes from the aspects which surround us in the natural world. The airy structures of our imagination, born of a like sky and atmosphere with that of Greece, should not shrink from comparison with those of Dodona and Hymettus. Our Olympus rises at our will, and the divine spirits which we summon to make sacred its high abodes, clothed in a political freedom superior to that of Athens, with less danger of having their supremacy disputed and their rites disturbed, should surely bring to their altars a priesthood no less great and glorious.

ARTICLE II.

THE EPOCHS AND EVENTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY, AS SUITED TO THE PURPOSES OF ART IN FICTION.*

It was the reply of Sir Robert Walpole,—a shrewd observer of men, a profound politician, and no shallow proficient in those agencies which ordinarily affect human opinion—when, in his last illness, his son proposed to read to him from some work of history,—"No, sir, I have long since done with fiction." Such a reply might well startle and bewilder that blind and credulous multitude, who seem, ordinarily, to confound this species of writing with holy writ, and accord to it a degree of reverence which they are quite unwilling to acknowledge in any consideration of Belles Lettres and the Arts. But the opinions of such men as Walpole, Raleigh, Bolingbroke and many others, of equally brilliant intellect and profound knowledge of human affairs, all of whom speak in very much the same language in relation to the same subject, might well persuade us to renounce our blind confidence in teachers, whose chief claim to our deference would seem to lie in their overweening gravity; or should, otherwise, conduct us to a more perfect faith in what is due to that art which draws, by a happy judgment, the matured fact from the embryo, and, by a series of successful speculations, leads us to those perfect narratives of life in society which the world has agreed to honour with the name of histories. A little modesty on the part of the mere historian in urging undue claims to consideration, based

* This paper forms the substance of certain lectures which were delivered before the Historical Society of the State of Georgia. The purpose for which they were prepared will excuse the somewhat too ornate character of the composition, which could only have been subdued to the usual style of essay or review, by such a thorough revision, as would probably have robbed the performance of all its freshness and freedom.

on grounds which are far less substantial than those which he might assert,—and a more expanded survey of the characteristics and objects of human genius, on the part of those who are much more likely to be impressed with names than with things,—might do much towards a solution of the difficulty under which, in a splenetic mood and moment, Sir Robert Walpole declared himself. The remark of this statesman,—considered the Machiavel of his day and nation, and who is supposed to have suffered great injustice in the final awards of public opinion in respect to his career,—embodied his own experience in the veracity of politics, rather than in that of history. It was the history of a small and selfish partisanship of his own time, and which possibly exists in all times, which provoked his censure ;—and it will not need that we should here stop to inquire in what degree he himself contributed to render it deserving of his own sarcasm.* His commentary calls for our notice only as it affords us an approach to another discovery which is also due to modern times. From certain venerable Cantabs of our own age we are astounded, for the first time, to learn that there is very little ancient history of any kind that is worthy to be relied on ;—that, what we have hitherto been reading with such equal delight and confidence—those exquisite and passionate narratives of Greece and Rome—narratives of soul and sweetness, which have touched our hearts with the truest sympathy and enkindled our spirits with the warmest glow of emulative admiration—are, in reality, little more than the works of cunning artists—eloquent narrators and delicious poets, who have thus dishonestly practised upon our affections and our credulity, making us very children through the medium of our unsuspecting sympathies. Stripped of its golden ornaments of rhetoric and passion, the tale which we are now permitted to believe, is one from which the most hearty lover of the truth may well recoil in disrelish or disgust. Where now are those glowing pictures over which our eyes have glistened—those holy traits of unbending patriotism and of undying love—

* It is to this statesman, the reader will remember, that we are indebted for the political axiom,—true or false, which is so popularly believed—that "every man has his price." This result Sir Robert is said to have arrived at by his own experiments.

of maternal courage, and of filial sacrifice—of a valour that knew not self, and of an endurance that confessed no pain?—Those touching instances of social excellence and loveliness which make of the patriarchal life—the first life of civilization,—one of the loveliest periods in the whole broad province of romance;—those instances, fertile in all that is dear to fancy and affection, which have moved us to share in all the ebullitions of joy and of suffering of which we read—now striving with the patriot and now yielding with the lover—enduring with the unshaken constancy of the matron, and kneeling with the pious devotion of the son! Alas! for all these we have no authorities. We are without those grave and reverend witnesses which a court of *Nisi Prius* would suffer in evidence under the general issue—and, thus, we are called upon to deny those histories to be true, which have awakened our souls to the first consciousness of the holiest kinds of truth—the truths of the greatest purpose,—the purest integrity, the noblest ambition, the most god-like magnanimity. We go back with the rigid historian to the axemarks in this antique wilderness, and we look for these generous instances and proofs in vain. We are shown the withered branches and the prostrate trunks, the blasted forms and the defaced aspects, the dry-bones of the perished humanity; but the breath of life is gone from its nostrils,—the heart that beat, the head that planned, the eye, the voice, that willed and commanded. The God-stamped visage and the animating action, are no longer heard and visible!

> "Its bones are marrowless, its blood is cold;
> It has no speculation in those eyes,
> Which it doth glare with."

And we may well add, with the terrified usurper—"let the earth hide thee!"—For there can be no friendly or genial influence to man in the resurrection of this miserable mock, and complete wreck, of all that was a people or a life! But not so, say these sage historians of modern times. We are to believe in the dry-bones, since our eyes have present proof of their existence. We are to recognize the articulated skeleton,—nay, having strung it together on certain wires, and subjected it to a sort of moral gal-

vanism, by which an occasional spasmodic action is betrayed, we shall even be suffered to conjecture that these dry-bones were once covered with flesh, and were informed by sense and feeling. But we may go no farther. When we would demand more, and assert more, we are met by a question as keenly decapitative in historical criticism, as any which debars disquieting debate in the halls of our legislation :—" where are your authorities ?" Alas ! for the student who lives only by authorities ! Alas ! for the genius who fears them ! The one may become dry-bones himself before he conquers his accidence ; and, for the other, if he leaves aught behind him, coupled with his name, it will be in such marrowless fragments, such empty relics of past emptiness, that even that class of pur-blind chroniclers, of which we have spoken, will scarcely be at the necessary pains to disinter them.*

The truth is—an important truth which seems equally to have escaped the sarcastic minister and the learned German, and which the taste that prefers the ruin to its restoration will be the very last to appreciate,—the chief value of history consists in its proper employment for the purposes of art !—Consists in its proper employment, as so much raw material, in the erection of noble fabrics and lovely forms, to which the fire of genius imparts soul, and which the smile of taste informs with beauty ;—and which, thus endowed and constituted, are so many temples of mind—so many shrines of purity,—where the big, blind, struggling heart of the multitude may rush, in its vacancy, and be made to feel ; in its blindness, and be made to see ; in its fear and find countenance ; in its weakness and be rendered strong ; in the humility of its

* The allusion here is to that class of modern historians, the professed sceptics of all detail in ancient history, of whom M. Niebuhr is the great example. It is not our purpose to disparage the learned ingenuity, the keen and vigilant judgment, the great industry, the vast erudition and sleepless research of this coldly inquisitive man ;—yet, what a wreck has he made of the imposing structure of ancient history, as it comes to us from the hands of ancient art. Whether the simple fact, that what he gives us is more certainly true than what we had such perfect faith in before, is, or should be, sufficient to compensate us for that of which he despoils us, cannot well be a question with those who have a better faith in art, as the greatest of all historians, and as better deserving of our confidence than that worker who limits his faith entirely to his own discoveries. We prefer one Livy to a cloud of such witnesses as M. Niebuhr.

conscious baseness, and be lifted into gradual excellence and hope! These are the offices of art for which she employs history, and it is these which make her not only the most lovely but the most legitimate daughter of heaven. It is through her that the past lives to the counselling and direction of the future, and if she breathe not the breath of life into its nostrils, the wires of the resurrectionist would vainly link together the ricketty skeleton which he disinters for posterity.

Considered with reference to its intrinsic uses, the bald history of a nation, by itself, would be of very little importance to mankind. Of what use to know the simple fragmentary fact, that Troy—a city we no longer find upon the maps—fell, after a siege of years—the proud and polished city before the barbarian and piratical foe? Of what use, or whence the satisfaction, placed upon the summits of Taygetus, to hear the long catalogue of names—names of men and nations—which the historian may, with tolerable certainty, enumerate and perhaps assign to each narrow spot within the range of his vision;—or, astride some block which hopeless conjecture may assume to be the site of the once mighty capital, to turn to our Lempriere and learn that here once dwelt a great people who were overthrown by a greater. We know this fact without Lempriere. Ruins speak for themselves, and, to this extent, are their own historians. They equally denote the existence and the overthrow;—the was and the is not—and the dry, sapless history, tells us nothing, which can tell us nothing more! But, musing alone along the plain of the Troad,—or traversing the mountain barriers of Parnes, Ægaleus, and Hymettus; looking down upon the sterile plains of Attica,—sterile in soil, but O! how fruitful in soul,—or sitting among the dismembered fragments which made the citadel in Carthage,—each man becomes his own historian. Thought, taking the form of conjecture, ascends by natural stages into the obscure and the infinite. Reasoning of what should have been from what is before us, we gather the true from the probable. Dates and names, which, with the mere chronologist are every thing, with us are nothing. For, what matters it to us, while tracing hopes and fears, feelings and performances, the greatness which was, and the glories which exist no longer, to be arrested in our progress

by some cold and impertinent querist, who, because we cannot tell him whether these things took place, one, two or three thousand years before Christ,—and because we cannot positively assign the precise name to the hero,—accurately showing this or that combination of seven or more letters—forbids our inquiry as idle. The inquiry is not idle, and history itself is only valuable when it provokes this inquiry—when it excites a just curiosity—awakens noble affections,—elicits generous sentiments,—and stimulates into becoming activity the intelligence which it informs!

Hence, it is the artist only who is the true historian. It is he who gives shape to the unhewn fact,—who yields relation to the scattered fragments,—who unites the parts in coherent dependency, and endows, with life and action, the otherwise motionless automata of history. It is by such artists, indeed, that nations live. It is the soul of art, alone, which binds periods and places together;—that creative faculty, which, as it is the only quality distinguishing man from other animals, is the only one by which he holds a life-tenure through all time—the power to make himself known to man, to be sure of the possessions of the past, and to transmit, with the most happy confidence in fame, his own possessions to the future.

For what is the philosophy of history but a happy conjecturing, of what might have been from the imperfect skeleton of what we know. The long analysis of probabilities keenly pursued through buried fragments and dissolving dust, is the toil of an active imagination, informed by experience, obeying certain known laws of study, and recognizing, as guiding rules, certain general standards of examination. The dull seeker after bald and isolated facts is no philosopher, nor can he claim even the doubtful merit of being a pioneer. He is a digger merely;—no more a discoverer than the hireling whom superior taste and wealth have employed to disencumber the buried city, Pompeii or Herculaneum, from its ashes;—careless where he explores, indifferent to what he sees, and only solicitous of the amount of labour done, which secures him, at the end of the day or week, his miserable compensation. That keen thought and pressing study, which, heaping conjecture upon conjecture, identifying facts with

their classes, tracing concealed character through a long series of details, educing causes from associated results, and tracing upward, step by step, by plausible suggestions, the several policies by which nations are built up and made famous, or overthrown and dismembered, would disdain the preparation of history if privileges such as these were denied to the historian. And, in the exercise of these privileges, he asserts and acquires more. He learns to speak with a familiar confidence of his subject. His imagination takes part with his judgment, officers and counsels his thought, wings it to the desired fact, and vividly pourtrays to the mind's eye the hero and the event. Thence he becomes a limner, a painter, a creator; and the picture glows beneath his hand, and the drama dilates in action under his glance, and he becomes a living and authentic witness of the past, and of all the circumstances which he has undertaken to unfold. Such is the true historian, and such is the sort of genius which it requires ere we shall dare to say that any history can live.

To such an intellect, it must be permitted to argue his case as an advocate, to choose his favourite personages from the chronicle, and to make perfect his ideals, by a nice adaptation to their known characteristics, of such as are essential to the completion of the model. In proportion as his work conforms to known proprieties and generally recognized probabilities, and in proportion as it makes favourably for the cause of humanity and virtue, upon the understandings of those to whom his labours are addressed, are his performances well or badly done,—and in just such degree will he be found to live in the regards of future ages. These, and these only, are his standards, speaking now only with a moral reference;—his taste, his skill, his eloquence, his powers of compression or dilation, of grouping and relief, being of course artistical requisitions, which are all essential to his success in every other respect. It is really of very little importance to mankind whether he is absolutely correct in all his conjectures or assertions, whether his theory be true or false, or whether he rightly determines upon the actor or the scene. Assuming that the means of his refutation are not to be had, that he offends against no facts which are known and decisive, no reasonable probabilities or obvious inferences,—it is enough if his narrative

awakens our attention, compels our thought, warms our affections, inspirits our hopes, elevates our aims, and builds up in our minds a fabric of character, compounded of just principles, generous tendencies and clear, correct standards of taste and duty. This, in fact, is the chief object with which all history is studied—the curiosity which impels the desire being equally moral and human, and having reference to the effect, upon character, of lessons drawn from the experience and the deeds of some superior branch or persons of the great human family. We care not so much for the intrinsic truth of history, as for the great moral truths, which, drawn from such sources, induce excellence in the student. The study of mere facts which do not concern our own progress, unless such results are designed to follow, would be as utterly unimportant to ourselves and children, as the solution of the much vexed question—"who built the pyramids,—Cheops or Cephrenes?" There they stand, and the philosophical historian, who really knows nothing beyond, has already declared the only really important fact in their history—namely, that they were the work of a merciless despotism—an equal trophy of miserable vanity and of absolute power;—a vanity not less absolute than the power which it exercised, but certainly far less productive of results, since the pyramids are no longer monuments! The philosopher reaches this conviction by a survey of the vast structures themselves. Their useless bulk provides a sufficient commentary on the labour which produced it;—and, even though the veracious chroniclers of the past were here—if we could trace, step by step, the progress of events by which they were raised to what they are—the great moral truth respecting them, of which we are already in possession, would receive no additional weight of suggestion. That moral truth, educed by thought from conjecture, is one wholly independent of details. Nay, even should the details become known, and conflict with the fragmentary facts which we have been accustomed to believe, they could not disturb a faith which they could never have established. To lay bare the tombs of their buried kings, to find their names, to retrace their experience, to declare their histories, would really add no desirable measure to the amount of human knowledge. It would only be multiplying a number of like facts and histories,

of which we have more than enough in possession for all the purposes of moral and human analysis. The profligacy of nature, even in her tombs, and wrecks, and disasters, leaves us nothing to desire, in the way of material, whether for conjecture, or philosophy, or sympathy. A natural curiosity may prompt us to inquire, as we loiter beside the unknown tumulus, "who sleeps below?"—but a conviction quite as natural, that there are thousands of inquiries to be made besides, of far more importance even to our tastes, for which life leaves us but little leisure, soon reconciles us to the necessity of yielding the solution of our doubts to that genius which seems especially appointed for such a purpose; —a genius which acknowledges no obstruction in the otherwise dark and frowning barriers set up by the huge and shapeless sphinx of oblivion, which presides over so vast a portion of the globe,—the genius of romance and poetry!—the genius of creative art! And well does he satisfy our doubts. Let us instance one among a thousand histories to which we may refer as pregnant with examples. A statue, one of the most exquisite remains and trophies of ancient art, is rescued from the undeserving but protecting earth. The sages gather round it, the high priests of civilization and philosophy, and each has his doubts, and each has his conjectures. The study is an elaborate one, of some complexity and finish, with certain insignia. One claims it as a Grecian Herald, another will have it a Laquearian Gladiator, while a third makes it a barbarian shield-bearer from Sparta. A host of other graybeards discover a host of other similitudes. Now, the mere conclusion of this doubt, is about the least important of the facts in this exquisite *chef-d'œuvre*. Solve the doubt, ascertain the fact, and we know nothing after all. Yet, what a tale is it found to embody. The poet interposes while the strife is loudest, and furnishes the perfect history.

"I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,—
And his droop'd head sinks, gradually low—
And through his side, the last drops, ebbing slow,
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now,

The arena swims around him—he is gone
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.
He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes,
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay;—
There were his young Barbarians, all at play,—
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday!"—

What a history is here!—how complete—how true! What a long narration of events is brought before us by a word—what a variety of character and fortune,—associations how gorgeous and how terrible, in the few, brief, moving lines which embody the revelation of a great artist. The circus opens upon us as we listen! We see the awful preparations for the strife—we note, with suppressed respiration, the bloody progress of the combat! We hear the buz of the eager multitude;—

"The murmured pity or loud-roared applause,
As man is slaughtered by his fellow man."

Rome is in our eyes,—that city of equal crime and empire. We see, at a glance, all her exulting pride and the hellish magnificence of her daily exercises. There are hosts of valiant men, there are troops of lovely women;—there is the pomp of purple, the blinding glare of jewels, and, in the midst, is one,—

"Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday."

But the divine skill of the artist does not suffer us to linger too long upon the guilty glory, and the too seductive aspects of this awful spectacle. The moral requires that we should behold the inevitable concomitants. He hurries us from the scene of terror and of triumph. We fly, with the last thoughts of the dying victim, to the banks of his paternal Danube. His unconscious children are at play. There too is their Dacian mother. She knows not of their father's fate, but her thoughts are still heavy and with him. Even at that moment, a fear of the truth, a dreadful presentiment of evil, is rising within her heart, and she turns away, with a soul that sickens at all she sees, from the

sports of her orphan barbarians. Such a history, thus told us, is complete in all its parts. It embodies many histories. Shall we consider it less true because it is attested in the undying measures of verse! Nay, should it hereafter be discovered that the exquisite performance of art by which the poet was provoked to history, was no victim to the infernal sports of the amphitheatre;—should it be shown that he was a Spartan shield-bearer, or herald, slain by sudden shaft upon the road-side, and not a barbarian dragged from the Danube;—will such a discovery, in any respect, impair the touching truths of such a history? Not a whit! The truth is still a truth apart from its application. The moral objects of the poet and the historian concern not the individual so much as the race,—are not simply truths of time, but truths of eternity, and can only cease to be truths in the decay of all human sensibilities.

The historian then must be an artist. All of the great writers of history deserve the title. Livy in past, and Gibbon in modern times, were artists of singular ability in the adjustment of details and groups, and in the delineation of action. Of the extent of their powers of conjecture,—their capacity for supplying appropriately the unsuggested probability, of filling the blanks in history with those details without which the known were valueless —it needs but to say that the facts in ancient history, compared with what is conjectured of the facts in their connection, were really very few, if not very unimportant. Original, or transmitted authorities, must always have been very vague and uncertain prior to the discovery of printing. Tradition then was the chronicler, and the poet was the historian. What fell in broken, mumbled sentences from the toothless gums of the one, was moulded into undying periods by the peculiar genius of the other, and Homer became a great master of history from no better sources of authority. We should be grateful to such historians and chroniclers. Would that they had left us a thousand more such histories. The language of Wordsworth, is not too fervent for the expression of our gratitude.

> "Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
> Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,—
> The poets;—who on earth have made us heirs,
> Of truth and pure delight, by heavenly lays!"

But, if the composition of history be the work of an artist rather than of a mere chronicler—if it be permitted to him to speculate upon the unknown, and to assume the fact from the probable—there is yet, in this respect, a limit to his progress. There is a God Terminus for the dominions of art, as there is for each subdivision of earthly empire. The appetite which calls into existence the artist of history, is not satisfied with what he achieves. He provokes a passion which he cannot gratify, and another genius is summoned to continue the progress into those dominions of the obscure and the impalpable, which he fears to penetrate. The one is no less legitimate than the other,—and the province of the romancer, if its boundaries be not yet generally recognized, at least leaves him large liberties of conquest. It is difficult to say what seas shall limit his empire—what mountains arrest his progress,—what elements retard his flight—or

> ————"Who shall place,
> A limit to the giant's unchain'd strength,
> Or curb his swiftness in the forward race!"

The liberties of conjecture which are accorded to the historian, become, in his case, liberties of creation. So far as the moral is concerned, the difference of privilege is no ways important. Their privileges differ only in degree. We permit the historian to look from his Pisgah into the land of equal doubt and promise; but the other is allowed to enter upon its exploration and to take formal possession of its fruits. Both, however, are required to recognize a law in common—that, namely, which rules that the survey and the conquest shall be made for the benefit and the blessing of the races which they severally represent. The fruits of their toil and talents,—by that decree of providence, which has fitted each of us for a special and peculiar labour—are meant for the human stock;—and when they have warmed our curiosity in what concerns the great family to which we belong —strengthened our faith in what are its true virtues, and what, under proper cultivation, it may become—excited our sympathies in the cause of its leading minds—filled our hearts with gentle hopes, and stimulated our souls to ardency in the grand and unceasing struggle after perfection which is the great business of

the ages—then have they severally executed the holy trusts of art which have been committed to their hands. The one employment, in these several toils, is quite as legitimate as the other. They both demand the most varied talents and the highest attributes of mind, which have been, or possibly can be, conferred upon the creature. If the historian is required to conceive readily, and to supply the motive for human action where the interests of a State, or a nation, are concerned,—a like capacity must inform the novelist, whose inquiries conduct him into the recesses of the individual heart. Both should be possessed of clear minds, calm, deliberate judgments, a lively fancy, a vigorous imagination, and a just sense of propriety and duty. In degree, both should be endowed with large human sympathies, without which neither of them could justly enter into the feelings and affections, the fears and the hopes, of the persons whose characters they propose to analyze. If the subject of the historian is one of more dignity and grandeur, that of the romancer is one of more delicacy and variety. If the task of the one is imposing because of its gravity, and the vast interests which are involved in the discussion,—the other is more attractive as it admits of so much more of that detail, in the affairs of a favourite, which brings us to a familiar acquaintance with the graces of the family circle, the nice sensibilities of the heart, the growth of the purest affections, and those more ennobling virtues of the citizen, which, as they are seldom suffered to show themselves beyond the sphere of domestic privacy, are not often permitted to glide into, and relieve the uniform majesty of, history. To show what are the privileges and performances of the romancer, imbued with a just sense of his rights and resources, is to provide the most ample justification of his claim to rank with the noblest workers in all the fields of art. On this subject we are daily growing more and more enlightened. The puritanism which, (because of certain vague religious scruples of the class which destroyed the ancient abbey and altar because of its forms and peculiar service,) felt itself shocked at the story, is no longer heard to complain; and the stale outcry of a class, no less bigoted, by which it was supposed that romance was a disparagement to history, or led only to a perversion of the truth in history, is pretty much at an end,—

silenced by the certain tendencies of romantic narrative to heighten the taste for history itself. Philosophy, to say nothing of common sense, begins to discover that Shakspeare's Chronicles of England, are not only quite as true, substantively, as those of Hume, but that they are decidedly more true to the great leading characteristics of society and human nature; and, in more recent days, it is found that Scott's uses of skeleton history have been to furnish it with life and character, to reclothe its dry-bones, and to impart a symmetry and proportion to its disjointed members, which, otherwise, were as unnatural and formless as that creation of the shambles, the modern Prometheus of Mrs. Shelly.* It was, for example, only with the publication of Ivanhoe, one of the most perfect specimens of the romance that we possess,† that the general reader had any fair idea of the long protracted struggle for superiority between the Norman and the Saxon people. Nay, it was not till that stately creation of art, with all its towers and banners, blazed upon the eyes of the delighted nations, that the worthy burghers of London and Edinburgh were made aware that there had been any long continued conflict between these warring races. The general opinion was that the Saxons had yielded the struggle with the fatal field of Hastings, and that the hope of their empire had gone down forever with the star of the intrepid Harold. It was reserved for the romancer to show how very different was the truth—how reluctant was the Saxon to forego his hope of the final expulsion of the intruder, and the restoration of his sceptre in the hands of a native. It is, in all probability, to this very story that we owe the re-opening of the recent inquiry, and the discussion of the events of this period, and in particular the very charming history of the Norman conquest and

* Let us not be understood as meaning to disparage any thing in this remarkable production, beyond the clumsy manner in which a daring conception has been worked out. It is evidently a crude and shapeless contrivance, which a little more preparation might have licked into better shape and more reasonable symmetry. In spite of the abortiveness of the details, and the total want of a scheme in the creation of the man, the story betrays, on every page, proofs of a real genius in the writer.

† Impaired, however, by the single piece of mummery toward the close, which embodies the burial rites of Athelstane and his resurrection. But for this every way unbecoming episode, the romance would be nearly perfect.

sway, from the pen of Monsieur Thierry. In this work, the writer, borrowing something of the attributes of the poet, has contrived to clothe his narrative with an atmosphere which confers upon it a rich mellowness not to be found in the works of the ordinary historian; and, with the advance of the popular thought, and the attainment of a just judgment in respect to the legitimacy of art in the delineation of history, shall we recover from the past many more perfect narratives concerning periods in our chronicles, of which, at this moment, we scarce acknowledge any want. As it was to Shakspeare's Richard that we owe that of Horace Walpole, so, to similar provocation, shall we be indebted for the restoration of all the British Kings from the old Saxon heptarchy. What glorious histories are in reserve for us, of the Edwards' and the Henrys,—the Tudors and the Plantagenets—

> "—— those rival roses, red and pale,
> That wrought our island's wo, in bloodiest fray."

It will not need, in determining generally the legitimacy of romantic art, to analyze its several classes and distinguish between their rights and privileges. Definitions poorly supply the place of general reading, and, even could ours answer the end proposed, it would make no part of our present design to undertake them. That much of most histories is built upon conjecture—that this conjecture, assuming bolder privileges, becomes romance—that all ages and nations have possessed this romance—that many ages and nations are now known only by its vitative agency—are matters which we have sought rather to suggest than to establish;—and, these being understood, we come now to the question—where, in *our* history, are the epochs, and what the materials, which, in the hands of the future poet and romancer, shall become the monuments of our nation—shall prove the virtues of our people,—declare their deeds, and assert, to the unborn ages, the fame of our achievements? We take for granted that all hearts, not absolutely base and slavish, will yearn for such future chronicles;—will throb, with a natural pulse of enthusiastic hope, in the persuasion that we are to have a song, and a statue, and a story,—which, when our political name shall be an echo, will make it

one that the generations will delight to prolong along with those of Greece and Ilium. It would be no less painful than unpatriotic to doubt that all who yield to the subject a thought or an affection, will feel with us, that, next to the prayer of a glorious immortality for our own soul, will be that which we prefer to heaven for the soul of our mother country.*

In entering upon this enquiry, we discard entirely the supposition that any thing has yet been done with these epochs and materials. We shall say nothing, as well from motives of delicacy as to avoid unnecessary discussion of any of our achievements, whether of pen or pencil, whether of prose or verse. We prefer looking at the country, naked as it is, unadorned, a rough, unhewn mass—shapeless to the eye,—unsightly, perhaps, in other eyes, not blinded by our feelings of sympathy and home! We look at the waste map from Passamaquoddy to the Sabine, and ask,—where are *our* treasures,—our jewels of song and story, —which, when our country shall have become venerable with years,—in ruin perhaps from frequent overthrow,—shall inform the groping nations what she has been, and yield to them, even in her decay and desolation, models of excellence not inferior to those which we owe to the genius of the East;—song and story which shall enchain the ear of future admiration,—telling of our endurance and our deeds—how we toiled and how we triumphed —what bards have sung in our glory, what statesmen have struggled in our behalf,—what valour was in the hearts of our warriors,—what purity and constancy in the souls of our women!

Let your grave lovers of skeleton history ask if these questions have ever been answered by the dry-bones for which they dig. Look for yourselves and behold,—in the long tract of ages which have vanished—at the mighty nations which have lived and live no longer,—behold the glorious record of the past, preserved to the future, only by the interposition of creative art. The statesman and the chronicler are dust, but the pictured story of the painter still speaks from the canvas,—and what an undying strain

* This epithet is employed here in a direct sense, as used by the citizen in reference to our own soil. Our note is intended to prevent the recognition of the old conventional phrase of the provincial, into which, as a people, we are but too ready still to fall.

of song, peals, echo upon echo falling,—prolonged without faintness, and felt without fatigue,—in the ears of the succeeding ages, from the heaven-touched lips of the inspired minstrel! What a voice for the ages have these! How they clothe their several empires with an unfading halo! How they govern the infant nations with a deathless moral! How they sway our hearts with their sweetness;—how they counsel our spirits with their strength! How we turn to them in our ignorance for our models—how we invoke them in our timidity for our inspiration! They preserve the treasures,—they provide the jewels of a nation, when they embalm, in the "cedar oil" of immortality, the great deeds which have done honour to mankind!

In asking for the materials of art which are afforded us by our own history, we must not be thought friendly to the notion that it is a sort of patriotism, amounting almost to a duty, that the American author should confine himself exclusively to the boundaries of his own country. Every man of genius has a certain character of independence, any attempt to confine which, would be as detrimental to his genius as it would be derogatory to his independence. This independence imparts to his mind an impulse, whose operations are very much like those of instinct. He cannot, if he would, withstand their influence; and if he seeks to obey the old law in such cases, and looks into his heart at all, he cannot help but write after its suggestions.* We should regard the doctrine of resolutely restraining ourselves to the national materials as being rather slavish than national, unless the native tendencies of the writer's mind carried him forward in their peculiar contemplation. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that the national themes seem to be among the most enduring. The most popular writers of all periods have been always most successful, whenever they have addressed themselves to either of three great leading subjects,—their religion, their country and themselves! We need not particularize, but such, in great degree, are the themes of Homer, of Dante, of Milton, Shakspeare, Byron, Burns and Scott, and, indeed, of almost every writer who has possessed

"Fool! 'said my Muse to me,' look in thy heart and write."—*Sir Philip Sidney—Astrophel and Stella.*

any marked individuality of character. We state this proposition broadly, without deeming it necessary to suggest the several exceptions and qualifications which a very close scrutiny might detect. That sort of poetry or romance which is of a didactic or merely moral character, never can possess individuality—will be as characteristic of one country as another, and will fail, therefore, to excite a very strong enthusiasm in any. The writings of Cowper—a master in his way—are of this kind. Wordsworth, in our own day, though probably the greatest contemplative poet that has ever lived, labours to a considerable degree under the same deficiency. The thoughtful minds of all nations will yield him a sacred place in their regards. They will go with him to the haunted well in secret—they will linger with him, till after nightfall, for the Egeria of the grove,—and adopt his musings with a ready faith which shall prove how true to the moral nature were the sources of his inspiration. But he will arouse no impulses, waken no heart to enthusiasm, enkindle no generous impatience, lead to no mighty action. His faith is not of a kind to provoke his own fervour, or to move, by his impulse and example, the zeal of those whom he teaches. His faith lacks equally in depth and elevation.

The contemplative writer is usually a phlegmatic in temperament, who kindles no eyes, stirs no souls, touches none of the more vital strings of the passions and the heart. This is reserved for writers who appeal to the blood and the brain in common—writers of great personal courage and character—who seem ever eager for action, and whose themes will be found, as instanced already, either in themselves, their country, or their religion. It is such songs as theirs that become songs of a whole people—it is their names that are never suffered to die from remembrance; and when they yield to the common lot, the voice of their departure thrills through the great world's heart as if an exquisite nerve, necessary to its sweetest functions, were suddenly smote asunder. How touchingly was this illustrated in the feeling among the humbler classes in London, as they gathered silently in groups beneath the windows of the house in which Scott lay dying, and pointed out the sacred mansion to one another. They had a personal interest in the genius that had wound himself into

the recesses of their own souls, and planted there the choicest seeds of new and grateful emotions. And so of one, of whom the moral world deems far less tenderly. We can all remember what a pang went through this wide western land when the news was brought us that Lord Byron was no more. He had made himself, in spite of his many weaknesses and vices, a part of our personal nature. His genius was a spell, which, speaking through warm and passionate blood, had appealed to similar passions, so effectually, as to command their sympathies even in spite of the truth. To all those to whom poetry constituted one of the necessary ingredients of life, his loss was personal. It was, as if all eyes had, on a sudden, beheld some great and customary light go out in darkness from the sky.

A superficial criticism might object that Lord Byron yielded but a small part of his genius to the illustration of his country's history, and that, of the plays of Shakspeare, the Chronicle Tragedies constitute but a small, and, perhaps, inferior portion of his mighty labours. We trust that we shall not surprise too many of our readers, when we assert that there is very little substantial difference, in reference to what is individual in the revelations of the artist, between the several topics of one's self, one's country, and one's religion! They produce like effects upon the mind of the writer—bring into activity the same intense individuality of feeling,—and, consequently, find that energetic and passionate utterance which will always commend the story to other minds. It is only a more noble egotism which prompts us to speak of our country,—to make its deeds our subject, and its high places our scene. It is because it *is our* country—because its high places have been present to the eye of our childhood, and all its triumphs and interests have been incorporated, by the silent processes of memory and thought, into the very soul of our personal existence. And, what can be more wholly personal to us than our religion? Identified with our country,—for the religion of a nation is the most subtle and widely diffused element in its whole character and history—it is yet the distinct possession and duty of each individual man! It appeals hourly to his hopes and fears, and all his deeds, whether of shame or greatness, necessarily refer to its holy and dread tribunal for that verdict upon which the vast in-

terests of the future life depend. Whether, therefore, the poet speaks directly of himself, his country, or his religion, he speaks in the fulness of his own soul, and from the overflowings of a burdened heart. His song is that of an aroused and earnest mind, deeply excited, and earnest in its least impassioned language. And he who speaks *from* the soul, we need hardly say, speaks *to* the soul. He who shows himself to be in earnest in what he says, cannot fail to produce earnestness in those who hear him. This, indeed, is the great secret of the orator—it is the great secret of success in all labours of the intellect which are addressed to the feelings or the understandings of men. The hearty expression of the Muse of Shakspeare, still declares the thorough English sentiment and feeling, even where his writings fail to contemplate English history ;—and so, also, does every breathing of Lord Byron's egotism and passion—his vain pride—his intense kindlings —his stubborn resolution not to do right because his enemies censure his wrong doing—declare the genuine English character. Addressing himself to this character in the usual language of English earnestness, he enters, every where, most readily, into the English sense. The commonest man in England, though he knows and cares little for the Muse, can yet understand such a song as that of Byron. It speaks the language of his own passion—his impulse—his confidence in his own strength—his bulldog powers of endurance—his stubborn consistency in error, from the false pride which makes him reluct at confession, and his resolution to persevere in wrong, for no better reason than because his neighbours have presumed to set him right.* All his great characteristics, his strength and his intensity, his scorn of the merely frivolous, his sense of the supe-

* We have an amusing instance of this characteristic national trait in the notes of a late English traveller in our country. It is Col. Hamilton, we believe, who somewhere tells us that he refused to seek or to hear Daniel Webster, though very anxious to do so, simply because every body in America assured him that this was absolutely necessary. What could be more thoroughly English than this mode of convincing every body that they knew nothing of the matter, and were guilty of impertinence. True, we are too much given to this sort of impertinence, but really Mr. Hamilton need not have punished us so severely. And so, Mr. Daniel Webster—to his own great mortification, doubtless remains to this day unknown to Col. Hamilton !

rior—his appreciation of virtue, even where it is unpractised,—his susceptibility to tenderness even in his pride and selfishness—the boldness of his aim, and the inflexible eagerness with which he pursues it—are embodied in the verse of this great but erring master.

The true and most valuable inspiration of the poet will be found either in the illustration of the national history, or in the development of the national characteristics. His themes, if unallied to these, will be very likely to lack permanence and general interest. The advantages afforded by national themes, have, therefore, seldom been disregarded by that class of writers whose genius is distinguished by much enthusiasm. They all feel, as if by instinct, the desire of Burns, who tells us, in his own artless manner, that his longing from childhood, had always been to make some song which should live "for poor old Scotland's sake." Putting aside the patriotism of this suggestion, it has its policy also. Poetry or romance, illustrative of those national events of which the great body of the people delight to boast, or of which they have only a partial knowledge,—possesses a sort of symbolical influence upon their minds, and seems, indeed, to become a visible form and existence to their eyes. As in the gorgeous rites of the Catholic Church, the God first enters the mind through the medium of the eye. The passion and the agony of Christ, having a lively representation to the sight, imparts, in turn, a vivid conviction to the heart; and the events of a national history, which we can associate with a place and with a name, endowed with vitality by the song of the poet,—will make that place sacred, as a shrine for far seeking pilgrims, and will render that name famous as a sound, for deep-feeling and warm-loving spirits. A national history, preserved by a national poet, becomes, in fact, a national religion. Taught by him, we every where behold the visible monuments of the agonies of our martyrs. In England, we rush to the Abbey and the Tower, to Kennilworth and the Old Bower at Woodstock. In Scotland, with the help of Burns and Scott, we traverse the fields of Bannockburn and Flodden—we look over the lonely Loch to the ruins of Castle Douglas; and stoop, with shuddering, and half averted gaze, over the blood-stains of Holyrood, which we are told, by the genius of the place, streamed

from the heart of David Rizzo. The spell of genius, in thus making sacred the ruins of time, preserves itself from oblivion. What would be the homage of our children, down to the fourth and fifth generation of those, born after, who will love us,—to that inspired bard, who shall conduct them to the high places of our glory—who shall lead them to, and designate, by a song and by a sign, the old fields of Eutaw and Saratoga—who shall say, in a glorious burst of lyrical lament, mixed with exultation—"there, even beside yon hillock, fell the veteran De Kalb,* and here—possibly on the very spot over which we stand—the death wound was given to the intrepid Jasper and Pulaski."†

II.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

BENEDICT ARNOLD AS A SUBJECT FOR FICTITIOUS STORY.

We assume that the man of genius inclines, by reason of natural affection, to do honour to his birth-place. Such an inclination belongs to the enthusiastic nature, and this is a sufficient reason why it should be indulged, since enthusiasm very rarely expends itself on objects of an unworthy character. Looking forward then to the future labours of the artist who shall preserve and adorn our histories, we turn to the histories themselves,—even as the sculptor, in whose mind reposes the perfect ideal of the statue, turns to the rude masses of the quarry from which it must yet be

* The Baron De Kalb was slain near Camden, in South Carolina, in 1780.

† Count Pulaski, the famous Pole, whose attempt upon the person of Stanislaus Poniatowski had so nearly proved successful. Pulaski distinguished himself as a partisan in the war of our revolution, and led a very efficient force of cavalry. He fell, with Sergeant Jasper—a hero in the ranks, whose extraordinary courage and conduct have lifted him into a fixed place in the national memory—before Savannah, in Georgia, (where these lectures were delivered,) then in possession of the British forces, while gallantly sharing in the assault made upon that city by the combined armies of America and France.

hewn. Have we these masses,—does our material answer for such purposes,—and in what quarter does it lie? The artist, it must be remembered, is a *seer!* He must be able to discover that which is hidden from all other eyes—which other minds have not conjectured—which other persons have not sought. If he fail in this, he is not the man to preserve a nation's history. You may be sure he is no genius. He may be clever, and not wanting in a certain sort of talent; but, with all his cleverness, he is not the person for a work like this. He is only an ordinary workman, in common clay, and his achievements will turn out commonplaces. It is in the exercise of the "vision and the faculty divine," that the seer is made conscious of one of the leading difficulties in the way of American romance. What portion of our history remains unwritten? What portion of it is so obscure that all may not equally see?—for, it need scarcely be said to the reader, that, if the ordinary citizen is at liberty to contravene your facts and dispute your premises, there is necessarily an end to your story. There must be a faith accorded to the poet equally with the historian, or his scheme fails of effect. The privileges of the romancer only begin where those of the historian cease. It is on neutral ground alone, that, differing from the usual terms of warfare, as carried on by other conquerors, his greatest successes are to be achieved.

A certain degree of obscurity, then, must hang over the realm of the romancer. The events of history and of time, which he employs, must be such as will admit of the full exercise of the great characteristic of genius—imagination. He must be free to conceive and to invent—to create and to endow;—without any dread of crossing the confines of ordinary truth, and of such history as may be found in undisputed records. He must not expose himself to suspicion by his facts—he must not fear dispute upon his grounds and premises. His materials must be of such a kind as to leave him without danger of rebuke for impropriety; and the only laws and criteria against which he must provide, must be those of good taste and probability, with such other standards as he himself sets up in his progress, as guages by which to work, himself, and by which others are to judge of his performances. When we are told that a history is too fresh for fic-

tion, it is because of this danger that it is so. When it is objected that America is too young for the production of a national literature, it is chiefly because of this difficulty, which fetters and defies domestic invention. Genius dare not take liberties with a history so well known, and approaches her task with a cautious apprehensiveness which is inconsistent with her noblest executions. It is asserted of our men of letters, particularly our poets, that their performances are simply English—that they have none of those distinguishing traits which might separate them from their great originals, and identify them immediately with the soil which they claim more particularly to represent. It would, perhaps, be matter of greater surprise were the fact otherwise. The reasons why such should be the case, are obvious when we remember what language it is we speak, and how recent is the period which first severed our ancestors from the great maternal nation. There are yet other reasons, the examination of which would carry us too largely aside, into the consideration of society in general; a task which would be equally inconsistent with our duty and present limits. It is enough to say that our history *is* English down to a very recent period—our infancy and childhood were wholly so, and such also are the most obvious traits in the character of our individuals,—particularly in the southern parts of the republic, where sparse settlements and the employments of agriculture, tenaciously retain for us the traditional peculiarities of the race. We have a perfect right to European materials in all moral respects—its histories, its achievements, its great names; and it is just as legitimate, on the part of our poets, to model themselves upon the great masters of the stock to which they originally belonged, and to employ their fashions and develope their conditions, as it is with those whose immediate sires preferred the more quiet and less courageous duty of clinging still to the ancient firesides. We have all our rights, as Europeans, to the stock of national character as acquired before our ancestors departed from the soil, as thoroughly as any Briton that remains. The past is ours, of English history, so long as a common ancestry toiled together in its acquisition. We shared a common birth, a common infancy and joint heritage,—and their Chaucers and Spensers,—their Shakspeares and Miltons,—are

ours, down to the moment when the besotted ministry of George the Third determined to spoil us of this heritage. As Americans, we sprang into birth, full grown, if not in panoply. Our political existence, as a nation, is not to be confounded with our existence as a people. The difficulties of the critics, foreign and domestic, and most of the blunders which the former make in regard to our country, are almost wholly in consequence of their confounding two moral propositions which are wholly irreconcilable. They insist upon an originality in our characteristics which is incompatible with our condition. They assume that our peculiarities must be as decidedly foreign to their own as if we were a people of Owyhee, and reproach us with a likeness to themselves, when, in fact, we claim those attributes and features to be as decidedly our right as theirs. That we should think and write, according to the examples and lessons of our ancestors, is not a whit calculated to impair our originality. As Americans, merely, the case is different, and there are peculiarities which we may engraft upon our ancient models, whether in literature or the arts, which would not impair their symmetry, and would not be amiss as regards our independence. We might also shake off some customs and practices, some laws and fashions, which, brought by our European ancestors to America, are yet unnatural and unfriendly to the soil. Our parents were English, but our garments need not be made by an English tailor. Our language is English, but such need not be the case with our literature. Our sense of liberty is English, but it does not follow that we might not rid ourselves of some of the brutalities of English law. Our education is in some respects too little, in others too much English; and many of our social and political strifes and troubles arise from the strange anomaly of a republican people borrowing their educational forms, their laws and models, from an aristocracy—from those of a nation whose objects do not seem the same as ours, and whose aims and performances have been so repeatedly hostile.

Such being our history as Americans—at once brief in term and deficient in independence—it is very obvious that, as a whole, it will lack, for the purposes of literature, much of that important obscurity—

"That little glooming light, most like a shade,"

which is so necessary to the invention, and so delightful to the desires and the instincts of the artist. That twilight of time, that uncertainty of aspect and air in history, which so provokes curiosity, and so encourages doubt—that moving, morning hour, grey and misty, which precedes and follows the dawn, but melts away, with all its vague outlines and wondrous shadows, in the broad bright blaze of the perfect day ;—or that other kindred period, at its close, when the imperfect shadows reappear, and, in the obscurity of the twilight, once more leave fancy free to her sports, and imagination to his audacious dreams and discoveries ;—these are the periods of time, in history, which, illustrated by corresponding periods of light and darkness, afford to the poet or the artist of a nation, the proper scope for his most glorious achievements.

The discovery of America, and its conquest, as a history, seem to have been a day perfect from the beginning. Compared with ancient histories, with those of Greece and Rome and Troy, there is very little of that twilight uncertainty in the events preceding and attending it, which corresponds with our similitude drawn from the history of our solar dawn, and which leaves the romancer at liberty to conceive his schemes, and embody with courage his own inventions. Our country, as a system, sprang up at once before the nations, a wild and wondrous form, rich in all the attributes of European lore, her arts, her philosophies, her religion. We had to pass through no periods of probation in compassing these attainments. There were none of those humanizing superstitions by which the infant heart of the nation was to be oppressed, before it could seek for, or receive the clearer light of a perfect religious inspiration. And the wild struggles of rival chiefs, the reckless passions of opposing despots, conferred upon us no such numerous histories of civil conflict, such as, during the middle ages, furnished unnumbered themes to the eager bard and novelist of every land in Europe. All this period of probation and childhood, of feebleness and ignorance, of power unknown to law, and laws unknown to reason or propriety, through which other nations have had to pass, and by which they have been endowed with marvellous treasures for the employment of superior ages,—was denied to ours. And what was not denied of the bold,

the wild, the strange or the terrible,—is, unhappily for present uses, a written record. We may take no liberties with it,—'nothing extenuate, nor set down aught'—for which there is not proper authority in the state papers. We had our beginning not only in an age when the intellect of Europe was every where active and curious, but after the discovery of printing and when the diffusion of the art had been so general, that, to see, and hear, and publish, beyond recall and suppression, were operations in their nature identical. These influences, while they render our facts less questionable than those of other nations, for this very reason, deprive the artist of his resources and his courage. Tradition is denuded of his stores, and the audacity of invention is paralyzed on the threshold. The poet who sings of Anglo-American achievements, must sing in fear and trembling,—and such a feeling, we need scarcely say, is a sad weight to be carried by the Muse. Her genius is nothing without her impulse, and the caution which ties her wings, keeps her back from that heaven of invention, the exploration of which is the only assurance for her fame. Her facts must be those which inspire doubt, not those which lead to conviction; and the narrowing records which furnish full details of a history, so far from helping her progress, in the construction of her divine fabrics, are, in reality, so many stumbling blocks in her path. The single leading fact in her possession, or the glimpse of such a fact, is worth to her ten thousand of the accompanying particulars. "It is not possible," as Lord Jeffrey somewhere sarcastically remarks, "to invest with epic or tragic dignity, the brigadiers of Bunker Hill or Saratoga, or to shed a poetical halo round a successful cruise of Commodore Rodgers or Decatur." Perhaps not, and for the very reasons which we have given; but the sneer of Lord Jeffrey will equally apply to Generals Burgoyne and Cornwallis; to Captain Dacres and Sir James Yeo. The very fact that we can couple these English names with those of our own countrymen, as sharing a common unfitness for the purposes of poetic composition, renders it very clear that it is because of the proximity of the events and persons to our own times, by which we are made too familiar with all the details in their histories, and not because of any intrinsic defect in the material itself,—that such is the case. Removed by time from any search-

ing analysis of curious people,—with but a name, and little more of a history, upon record,—a vague tradition alone declaring the patriot hero, or the tyrannical invader—and Decatur and Dacres might occupy a place in epic fiction quite as noble as that of Troilus and Ajax. And, even now, something in the way of song and story may be done with materials even so unpromising as these. If they cannot furnish themes for the epic and dramatic poet, they are yet not wholly ineligible to other artists; and the lyrist, and the novelist, may achieve a triumph in exercises, in which the more rigid laws of the Epopee would provoke failure and contempt. When Campbell sings

"Of Nelson and the North,"

we do not find our poetic sensibilities set at defiance. Our tastes are not offended. The theme is in unison with the strain, and we acknowledge a pliancy in the rules of art, in this respect, which we should fail to perceive in other branches. It might be more difficult to make Nelson the hero of a drama, or of a poem, the laws of which were even so indulgent as those of Scott's ballad romances. We know too much of Nelson for this, and the author could take no such liberties with his biography as to render his deeds and character symmetrical. The song of Campbell shows us his hero but at a single moment,—speaks of him rather than presents him; and, in terms of vague eulogium, clothed in poetic beauty, renders him a graceful abstraction, the ideal of a hero, rather than *the* hero whom we know—and to this we can oppose no objections whether drawn from propriety or history. The same personage would be susceptible of still better use in the modern novel. Such material would be more corrigible in the hands of the artist of prose fiction. This species of composition, as it combines some of the qualities of almost every species of imaginative art, whether prose or verse, painting or statuary, so is it susceptible of far more various employment than any. More pliant in the hands of the master, it is more universal in its appreciation of the desires of the multitude. It enters more readily into the general sense, and, to a certain extent, has superseded, and must continue to supersede, in some degree, the uses of all others. To its influence may be ascribed, in part, the decline of the drama in

popular estimation; and, it is scarcely possible that, while its sway continues, there will be any return to the elaborate works in poetry, which distinguished periods of less diversified forms of literature. That such has been the effect of this species of composition, may be to be regretted by those who confide entirely in the arbitrary manifestations of form in the classic genius; but that such is its effect and influence, must be regarded as no small proof of its legitimacy as a genuine offspring of art. Insisting upon this particular, we shall consider the prose romance of modern periods, along with the attributes of poetic art as known to former ages, in discussion of the pliancy, for their common purposes, of the materials which may be furnished by American history.

We have said, differing from high British authority, that something, even now, might be done with our Brigadiers of the Revolution. A single instance, by way of illustration, may passingly be examined. We will select one the events in whose history we consider particularly susceptible of use, even at this early day, by the novelist;—but by the novelist only, for the mellowing hand of time is necessary to effect its entire preparation for the hands of other artists, whose laws are much more arbitrary, and whose province is necessarily more confined. Our instance shall be drawn from the most exciting period of the Revolution. Our subject shall have been one of its proudest spirits—a gigantic aspect in our ranks—a man who,

> — "in valour proudly eminent,
> Stood like a tower!"

His deeds shall have been of the last importance to the country. They shall relate to a series of the most vivid and interesting transactions—distinguished by an action, lively, painful, and pathetic,—uniting the extremes of glory and of shame, the highest and the lowest purposes of human ambition. We speak now of the deeds and history of Benedict Arnold—of Arnold the Traitor!

Perhaps, were the question put suddenly, without concert, to any group of literary men, promiscuously assembled throughout the United States—were they required at once to designate the

one man of the revolution, whose history beyond that of all others, furnishes the most obvious materials for the romancer—the probability is that the great majority would agree upon this man! No other series of events, in all that history, seem more naturally to group themselves in the form of story. None were of a more important character—none endowed with a more tragic interest. The fate and fortunes of Benedict Arnold, are, indeed, such as, beyond all others, seem meant "to point the moral and adorn the tale." Brave to desperation, heroism was with him a natural and noble instinct. Among the first to take up arms in the cause of his country, he was the first to lead into the thickest ranks of danger. Privations only seemed to heighten his capacity for endurance, while opposition warmed his valour into a flame which his own streaming blood could never extinguish. Gallantly leading on the charge, vigorously heading the assault, the epic hero of antiquity never presented a more exquisite instance of fortitude, conduct and audacity of valour, such as bestows animation upon song and imparts impulse to the creative glow of the inspired genius. We behold him at Quebec and at Saratoga, and still he appears the same generous and fearless hero,—as bold as Hector, as unyielding as the greater Ajax. What a character for the first grand opening scenes of the drama—what swelling acts for the great theatres of patriotism and song! —Sure, to secure the admiration of the spectator, as Arnold himself, most certainly, did, at this period, secure that of the American people. Doubtful of their great hope—suffering from privation—harassed by frequent defeat—it is not wonderful that the brilliant career of Arnold—particularly the great share which he had in winning the field of Saratoga—should have dazzled their eyes and baffled their judgments. His star continued to rise in the ascendant, like the sun,—

"—— when his beams at noon
Culminate from the equator,—"

till, almost alone, it fixed the admiration of the people, who began to regard the calmer and the colder Washington as the stalking horse of the pageant—wanting in heroism as conduct,—the mere presentment of the king—the Agamemnon, perhaps, but not the

Achilles—the Æneas, but not the Hector, of our Troy! And the cry runs on Arnold.* Even those who possess an abiding faith in the trūe virtues and the real greatness of Washington, begin to address him in the language of expostulation, such as the Prince of Ithaca employs when he would provoke Achilles to exertion.

> "Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
> That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;
> Since things in motion sooner catch the eye,
> Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,
> And still it might; and yet it may again,
> If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive,
> And case thy reputation in thy tent."

It was the good fortune of America, as it was the true greatness of Washington, that he was not impatient of himself—that he could resist equally the entreaties and the arguments of friends, and the goadings of his own ambition—that, heedless of the cry which ran on Arnold, he could content himself, cased in his tent, waiting his hour, until the time for proper action had arrived;—while his less circumspect rival, encouraged to presumption by success and the adulation of blind worshippers, maddens with an equal blindness; and, first intoxicated by hope, then furious by disappointment, grasps the torch of the incendiary for the destruction of the high temple in which he had been sworn the officiating priest. His hand is lifted, but his deed still cloaked, and the hour is fast speeding whose entire revolution is to bring about the catastrophe, equally fatal to his honest fame, and to the liberties of his country. The interest grows naturally with the struggle

* Speaking with strict propriety the cry ran on Gates, with whose name the Convention of Saratoga was more particularly coupled. But, in point of fact, the mere individual makes but little difference, since it was with the caution and prudence of Washington, that the impatience of the public found fault. His Fabian policy did not suit the impetuous temperament of the people, though it saved them. Besides, Arnold was the true hero in the overthrow of Burgoyne, and this is now the popular conviction, though it was not so at the time of the occurrences. Gates was never any thing better than a name. His talents were small, and his behaviour to Washington extremely little and unworthy.

which is in progress, equally in his mind, and between the advocates of the rival heroes. The people, like the ancient chorus, clamour their wishes, and bemoan their disappointments. Unlike the ancient chorus, however, they soon begin to take an active part in the events of the drama. The result is doubtful. Ambition begins to rear his crest in triumph, while patriotism trembles with numerous and growing apprehensions. Faction exults in confidence, while affection falters in the trust which it once had in the genius of Washington. For a moment—for a moment only—the fate of this great nation swings doubtfully in the balance! The catastrophe follows!—none more sudden,—none more complete in the whole wide world of scenic exhibition. The fall of a great man!—not by death, for death is no foe to the fame that is already sure in past performance!—not by the jealous rival, or the dark assassin;—but by the rapid spreading of the single plague-spot—the inherent baseness in his own soul. And such a fall!—To what utter perdition, not only of all future fame, but of all past achievement—the annihilation of that hope which lived in coming days and deeds, and the overthrow of those high monuments which men had raised up as trophies to denote the deeds already done! A mighty, an irrevocable fall—total to the hero—terrible to the spectator—like that of Lucifer—"never to rise again,"—yet not such a fall as would satisfy the catastrophe, or furnish an appropriate dénouement for the dramatic scene. A fall to be stigmatized by the curses of the chorus—to be moralized by the didactic poet into a thousand homilies for the ears of reverent youth;—but utterly insusceptible of use upon the stage—having no outward action, no results corresponding with the crime—no punishment which human eye might follow, proportioned to the extent of his deserving;—a fall of the soul rather than of the frail body which it informs—a conflict of the wild, benighted heart, ending in moral discomfiture and shame,—not of the muscular and mighty frame overborne by superior skill and power, and yielding but fighting bravely to the last.

And with what adjuncts of poetry and feeling—of tears and tenderness—of pride and passion—may that dark conflict be allied! His was not the single ruin. It is coupled with the fate of André—a mournful story of the blight of early promise.

Young and full of genius—loving and full of hope—brave and burning with ambition—he too falls with the traitor—is dragged down to the same dreadful moral death! He perishes—a sad catastrophe,—but one from which the human spectator recoils with horror. The chorus must close the narrative. The scene which degrades the hero must not offend the audience. André upon the dishonouring tree, like Hector roped to the car of Achilles, is a spectacle which may be spared the eyes which have previously been delighted with his youth, his beauty, his generous virtue, and his noble valour and devotion!

There is surely much that is dramatic in this history. The leading events, thus grouped in general terms to the entire exclusion of details, are particularly imposing in their aspects,—many of them are startling and full of consequences. The deeds of the hero are as brilliant as his treason is utter and unqualified. Arnold was no imbecile in action. He was only so in morals. His courage was unquestionable, and he exposed himself personally in battle, as was the case with the valiant man in ancient warfare. His audacity was immense, and he entertained along with it a love of approbation, an appetite for praise, which, had his culture been of a better sort, would have been the most impassioned love of glory. But, with all these circumstances in its favour, his story, as at present known, is essentially undramatic. It will not always remain so. The objections to its present employment for the drama arise from our familiarity with the details, many of which, to make the subject available for the stage, must be made to yield place to others more tractable and appropriate. When these details shall be no longer present to the memories of men,—when but little more shall be remembered than the bold, but impressive fact, that one among our bright and shining lights,—one of the noblest in seeming and in promise,—went down from our sky, in shame and darkness, at the very moment when all eyes were fastened upon it in hope and admiration,—then, doubtlessly, the future Shakspeare of our land,—if we are ever to be blessed with such an advent,—will seize upon the event and shape it into some long and enduring chronicle. And this he will do, however his details may vary from the history, by

no such violations of general truth as should outrage propriety. He will be conscious of no such barriers as restrain us now. He will exercise such privileges of art, legitimate for his purpose, as the living generations will not tolerate, and the living author, conscious of the true facts, will not venture to assert. He will depict the hero in his day of completest triumph,—no stain upon his shield,—watched, almost worshipped, by the admiring multitude, and with none of those misgivings of success which embitter the hopes and disturb the moral equilibrium of the ambitious nature. The philosophic observer alone may be permitted to see, lurking close,—possibly, in the shape of a virtue,—the single plague-spot in his soul, which is destined to spread, with a rank rapidity, over the growth and freshness of the better nature,—latent, however, —not spreading,—perhaps not to spread,—but depending for its growth or its suppression, upon the chances of a wild and never to be satiated appetite for sway. Grant him what his ambition seeks, and seeks worthily, and we shall see no more of his inherent canker. It will be wholly conquered by the triumphant virtues, which have no need to succumb in the easy gratification of his heart's prevailing passion. Such is the moral portrait of Arnold, as he appears, and may be made to appear, in the opening scenes of the drama. It may be that the future poet who thus undertakes his delineation,—uninfluenced by that feeling of reverence which fills *our* hearts, when we approach the great hero of civilization,—will venture to delineate, as in honourable conflict for the ascendancy, the rival stars of Washington and Arnold. The one, calm, and cold, and haughty, in his serene pride of place ;—the other, fiery and impetuous, hot with haste, spurring forward, sleepless always, to that glorious eminence which the jealous fate denies that he shall ever reach. It will not perhaps be difficult, a hundred years hence, to make it appear that Arnold was the victim of some great injustice,—to show that his rightful claims were denied,—at all events, to make it appear that such at least was his own conviction,—a conviction not uncommon to the nature covetous of fame and jealous of any division, however small, of those rewards of glory, on the attainment of which the whole affections of his being have been set. He shall be baffled in these desires. He shall be defrauded of these hopes.

Fate shall war against him,—his best merits shall fail of their fruits,—he shall aim in vain,—he shall toil honourably and without purpose; while the better fortunes of his rival carry him onward, with swelling sails, in his own despite, to the haven of their mutual ambition. The star of Washington rises, and gathers hourly increasing lustre, in due degree as his declines from the summit,—waning away, under a cruel destiny, in mockery of all his merits and all his achievements. Such are the frequent vicissitudes of fortune, and no probabilities would be violated by the artist who shall thus depict, to remote ages, the career of this unhappy hero. What follows from such a history? The bitterness of a proud heart, denied! The misanthropy, the jaundiced green of envy and mortification, discolouring to his mind all the objects of his thought, and working, subtly and strongly, upon that little, latent, plague-spot in his soul, till his passions break all bonds,—unleashed tigers,—a gnawing fury and a howling hate urging them on, scorning the reason that would guide and mocking the power that would restrain. The temptation follows,—and the fall! That temptation may be made to work upon nobler feelings than any which we are accustomed to associate with the *auri sacra fames!* In this respect, alone, the true history of Arnold should be ennobled for the sympathy and commiseration of less knowing periods. The tempter, clothed in the British uniform and armed with the signet of his king, shall be made to approach the denied and wronged ambition with the deference of an admiration only so far subdued as to forbear offence,—shall dilate only upon the inappreciating injustice of a country which refuses to recognize and properly to honour such superior merits;—shall adroitly exaggerate to the proud, vain man, the paramount importance of his services, the wonder of his achievements and the glory which they have rightly gathered in the world's esteem. Then, by adroit insinuation, the better justice shall be shown which rewards such heroism in the opposing service. It will be part of the tempter's scheme to insist that the war is merely a civil contest between rival parties in the same nation,—a dispute involving only the success of contending factions, not a principle,—not the liberties or safety of a people bravely contending for their rights. It will not be difficult for the spectator to imagine how

such a man as the poet has already described, stung by a sense of injustice and neglect,—which, in the case of merit, is the worst injustice,—will give greedy ear to the solicitations and suggestions of the tempter. Supposing the serpent to approach his task with even ordinary ingenuity, it will not be difficult to see that such a man, thus endowed, and with a latent defect of the moral nature already shown, must fall! Thus far, the story, even as we read it now, is dramatic in its character. The difficulty lies in what remains. The treason of Arnold was that of the cabinet, —of the politician—and not the hero. There is no grand action, addressing itself to the eye of the spectator, corresponding with the extreme self-sacrifice of the subject, and the general alleged importance of the events. The mere surrender of an impregnable post, though the key of the country,—and the delivery of a brave army into unmerited captivity,—are not events which can be made imposing before an audience, however great may be their real interest to the fortunes of a nation. They equally lack the two greatest essentials of dramatic art, individuality of development, and an action, continually rising in interest, to the close of the catastrophe. The flight of Arnold from the scene, and the degrading death of André upon it, are other difficulties which can only be overcome by the dramatist who shall address himself to an audience totally ignorant of or indifferent to these details—which, he may then so vary as to accommodate to the requisitions of the stage. When the grandson of the last revolutionary soldier shall be no more,—when the huge folios which now contain our histories and chronicles, shall have given way to works of closer summary and more modern interest,—the artist will find a new form for these events, shape all their features anew, and place the persons of the drama in grouping more appropriate for scenic action. There will be a more individual character given to the history,—the general events will be thrown out of sight,—the personal will be brought into conspicuous relief in the foreground,—the rival heroes of the piece will be forced into closer juxtaposition, and the treason, detected in the moment of its contemplated execution, will be crushed by the timely interposition of Washington himself. He will be made to have seen the true nature, and to have suspected the purpose of the

traitor, even from the moment of his very first lapse from honour,—to have had his eyes upon the tempter,—a stern, cold, silent watch,—keen and vigilant, and the more terrible from its very silence and unimposing calm. His watch will have been maintained with an interest no less personal than patriotic. It will not impair the character of Washington, to show that he too had his ambition;—and, serving glory as well as his country, was filled with a two-fold jealousy of him who, in striving with him for the one, was doing so, fatally and criminally, at the expense of the other. It may be that, in the hands of the future dramatist, the sword of Washington himself shall be made to do justice upon the head of the traitor,—as, by a similar license, Richmond slays Richard, and Macduff the usurper of Scotland, in the presence of the audience. It will only be doing justice to the real merits of Arnold, to show him at least fighting bravely to the last, and proving the possession of a stout spirit, even though he falls the victim of a corrupt and dishonest heart. Or, with a slight variation from this dénouement, and with some nearer approximation to the historical facts, while his sword achieves the death of the foreign emissary, (André,) his stern voice, rising pre-eminent over all the sounds of battle, shall send the baffled traitor, (Arnold,)—hell in his heart and curses on his lips,—to the inglorious scaffold which the audience does not see. The fate of André may be woven in with such a history, in the form of an under-plot, by a process well known to the dramatic artist. You have but to endow Arnold, or his wife, with a sister, who, won by the love of André, shall be made the instrument for bringing about the treachery of the hero. The exercise of her affections and their defeat, may be employed to impart tenderness and animation to the subordinate scenes; while the wife of Arnold, whether described as a patriotic matron, like Portia, or a woman devoted to her lord, like Medora, whether "guilt's in his heart" or not,—will, like the Belvidera of Jaffier, or the unsexed companion of Macbeth, furnish all that is needful for the interest in the domestic relations of the hero. Such departures from the absolute history, as are here suggested, will not offend the spectator some hundred years from now. They would not even now offend a British or a Continental audience who know nothing more than the simple fact,—if they

know even that,—that the American Revolution was distinguished by one great traitor whose name was Benedict Arnold. But such freedoms with details with which we are all so familiar, would scarcely do with us. So fresh in our memories are all the facts in this connection, that any such violations of the written record would convert into a hostile critic every sturdy militiaman from Maine to Mississippi.

But, even with our present familiarity with the particulars in the life of Arnold, it would not be difficult for the art of the novelist to endow them with the highest tragic interest, and to give that dramatic value to his materials, which is the great distinguishing charm, in this form of composition, as it is known to recent times. This could be done without coming into conflict, in the smallest degree, with the written history. In this fact we are led to see how very superior are the privileges of the prose romancer. His realm is wider and more various in its possessions. His wing is more excursive. He possesses a right of way into regions in which other artists possess not—by reason of their own self-made impediments—even a right of entrance. The laws by which he is bound are less rigid and restraining. He may be tragic or comic as he pleases. He may depict in action, or describe in narrative as best suits his purpose. He may employ dialogue in such portions of his work as suggests the use of dramatic materials, and, when the action subsides, be simply narrative and descriptive; while, serving as Coryphœus, he may provoke among his auditors a personal interest in himself, by the running commentary with which he delineates the characters, and discourses upon the moral of the events which he relates. He is neither limited by localities nor by time;—nor bound, as in the case of the dramatist, to concentrate his interest upon the fortunes of some one conspicuous personage. He may carry his story through a period of many years,—may conduct his actors into many countries,—may indulge in numerous digressions,—may require the sympathies of his audience for many persons at the same time, and does not need to hazard his strength upon those events only which conduce to the catastrophe. In brief, the art of the novelist enables him to conform his writings more nearly to the form and aspect of events

as they really happen, than can ever be the case with the dramatist and poet,—and this very conformity to nature is a source of vast freedom and flexibility. His laws are not only less arbitrary than those of other artists, but his privileges combine, in turn, those of all the rest. He may contend with the painter in the delineation of moral and natural life,—may draw the portrait, and colour the landscape, as tributary to the general *vraisemblance* which is his aim. He may vie with the poet in the utterance of superior sentiment and glowing illustration and description ; with the dramatist in his dialogue and exciting action ; with the historian and philosopher, in his detail and analysis of events and character. Shall we doubt the legitimacy, or marvel at the progress, of an art, which, while asserting these high powers, not only of its own, but in common with other arts,—conforms, in its delineations, more decidedly than any other, to the various aspects of man, and nature, and society ? It is not improbable, indeed, as has elsewhere been suggested, that the decay of the drama, as a popular amusement, is, in some degree, to be attributed to the general prevalence in modern and recent periods of this species of composition. An inquiry into the facts necessary to this suggestion, would be one of immense interest, but would lead us greatly aside from our present argument.

III.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

THE FOUR PERIODS OF AMERICAN HISTORY.

We have passed over many topics, illustrative of our subject, suggestively, and without seeking to discuss them. Our limits would not suffer more. Having intimated to you that the poet and romancer are only strong where the historian is weak, and can alone walk boldly and with entire confidence in those dim

and insecure avenues of time which all others tremble when they penetrate; having arrived at the conclusion that, in the employment of historical events, for the purposes of art in fiction, a condition of partial obscurity and doubt in history being that which leaves genius most free to its proper inventions, is the one which is most suitable for its exercise;—it becomes necessary, if possible, to ascertain and to define those periods in our history which are most distinguished by this palpable obscurity—which are the most coupled with this condition of picturesque doubt and uncertainty—and which, hereafter, or even now, may be found most eligible for the uses of the muse. This susceptibility of the *matèriel* of fiction, is, of course, a matter of degree. The real genius wants but little of the absolute in fact upon which to work. It is his rare endowment to subject the most stubborn events to his purposes—to mould the most incorrigible forms, and, out of truths the most ungracious and little promising, to evolve the most imposing and delightful fabrics. A happy thought, an inspired fancy, brings out to his mind the form and the colour in the mass, and teaches him to throw off the incumbrance, and in what way to relieve from its impediments, the exquisite ideal that his imagination has pictured in the rock. But, even for him the way may be made smooth, as the French and Italian novelists opened paths for Shakspeare. The grosser difficulties of the work may be overcome, and some of the barriers thrown down, though by the rudest workman, for the uses of the mightiest master.

To facilitate our examination of this subject, we propose to divide the history of our country into four unequal periods. This division, however arbitrary it may seem, is one that belongs naturally to our modes of progress, and would suggest itself to the most casual inquirer into the moral steps by which we attain the several successive epochs in our national career. The first period should comprise the frequent and unsuccessful attempts at colonization in our country by the various people of Europe—the English, French and Spaniards—from the first voyage of the Cabots, under Henry the Seventh,—and should include all subsequent discovery and exploration, by whatever people, down to the permanent settlement of the English in Virginia. This pe-

riod involves a term of seventy-five years, and abounds in romantic detail and interesting adventure. This was a time when the fountains of the marvellous seemed every where to be opened upon mankind—when, on the eve of wonderful discoveries in the natural, the people of Christendom lent a greedy ear to every sort of legend which held out similar assurance in the spiritual world—when popular faith reposed without a doubt upon the very bosom of fancy, and sucked in the wildest superstitions from the breast of the most prolific invention ;—when the search after the improbable and the impossible prompted a singular disregard to the wonders that were real and every where growing, broad cast, around the very footsteps of adventure. All the pulses of mortal imagination seemed to have quickened at this period under a like maternal influence. Man was alive and eager in the thirst after great truths, and his progress was in due correspondence with the ambitious and restless nature of his desires. If he found not exactly what he sought, he yet laid his hand upon treasures which time has shown him were inappreciable in value. The real advantages of printing were then for the first time beginning to display themselves. The great but degraded masses were slowly realizing its fruits, and the popular imagination seemed to expand with new wings and eyes, dilating in the far survey of its newly opened possessions, in all the provinces of art and office. It will be sufficient to illustrate from one department for the rest—to show, by the achievements of the muse—as we well may—how active, on a sudden, had grown that impatient genius of uprising Europe (in England at least,) to which the present owes so many trophies and delights. The period we have indicated was the great period in the literary history of Great Britain—vulgarly and improperly called the Elizabethan period. We have but to name the masters of that day—to point to Marlowe, Ben Jonson and Shakspeare ;—to Spenser and to Sidney ; to Bacon, and to him—a genius no less noble than hapless—whom Spenser has so felicitously called the "Ocean Shepherd." Never was era, in any country, more rich than this, in the one designated—in the abundant variety, the matchless beauty, the masculine pathos, the grace, the strength and the originality of its productions. Nay, never was period half so rich. What was true of its poetry, was

scarcely less true in other respects. In fact, it is usually a period most rich in poetry, that is most prolific in progress and discovery. The offices of the imagination are much more various than men ordinarily suppose. It is her eye and her wing that guide and impel genius in all of her departments. It is her sensibilities that quicken the impatient pulses of all adventure—her yearnings that prompt the hopes, and warm the courage of the builder and the battler, whether his province be the conquest of empires, or the more humble desire which contents itself with the planting of towns and the rearing of shrubs and gardens. The spirit therefore which constitutes the soul of poetry, and urges the unwearied labours of the poet, is shared in some degree by all who work, in all the branches of human industry. The labour which is undertaken *con amore*, is a labour which originates in the imagination solely ; and we shall take but an imperfect view of the European mind, as exhibited in what may be termed the more national progress of the age indicated, if we fail to see in it the strong proofs of sympathy with that more ethereal working of spirit, in the same nation, to which we are indebted for its poetry and art. Kindred with the poetry of a race is its religion ; and this also was a period when, in England, under the impulse of a fresher spiritual yearning, the religion of the age, taking its direction from the unregulated passions of the popular mind, grew more than usually active in the great struggle with the inner world—when, the same imagination, unschooled and untutored in the popular mood, grew wild with misdirected enthusiasm—when, accordingly, the dark spirits seemed to receive a call to new exertions in consequence of the dangers from this very passionate activity of the common mind—when there were witches in the land —sorcerers needing to be baffled—devils to be cast forth—all angrily striving for continued possession of their ancient strong-holds in the troubled heart of man. A transition state, in a people, is thus always one of excited imagination. All the waters become turbid. But their commotion, though in storm, is the proof of new and more hopeful life. It is the sign of a new spirit abroad. There are clouds—there is blackness—gloom in the sky—error on the face of the land—but the winds and the waters sweeten themselves by progress, and the thunderbolt which rends the spire,

purifies the atmophere which envelopes the stagnant city. In the history of the being whose law of life is eternal progress—from province to province, and from empire to empire—it is the calm alone that we have any need to fear.

The vigorous wing put on by the mind of Europe in the sixteenth century, might well lead the nation into cloud and frequent obscurity. And thus it is that we find King James—a sovereign who shared the excursive imagination of his age, without its judgment—writing with equal enthusiasm against witches and tobacco. His superstitions were those of wiser men who did not share in his antipathies. Thus, and then it was, that Bacon had his superstitions also—that Columbus meditated the restoration of the Holy City, and dreamed of the Golden Chersonesus—when Marco Polo was the popular authority—when Sir John Maundeville was the very ideal of the traveller—when Raleigh asserted the existence of the Anthropophagi, and told of a people who wore their eyes in their shoulders, and carried their heads under their arms.

Every working age and people must have their superstitions. Their superstitions are at the bottom of the work and impel it. But for the exaggerations of the imagination, we should lose the chief incentives to endeavour. It is by these that we are deluded to achievement. The objects which reward our toil, are not those which provoke it. The chemist was first a seeker after the philosopher's stone. It was pursuing Raphael that he met with Hermes. We must be careful then, in all our studies of the actual, in the history of the past, not to forget the apparent, by which it was enveloped as in a luminous garment, dazzling the eye from afar, and inviting the enterprise. The superstition is not the less a part of the religion, because, when we have attained to the real, we can separate it from the luminous atmosphere by which it was made to loom out upon the imagination. The faith of a time, by which a people works, is a truth, though it teaches many falsehoods. The artist who would employ the materials of American history for his purposes, must be an earnest student of the lore—must warmly sympathize with the spirit—by which all Europe was governed at the same corresponding period. There are no absurdities in a time, when a people is alive and in action, which the true philosopher can despise. The absurdity which

moves the national heart, has always a real foundation, and, to the writer of fiction, it affords the best material by which to work upon the hearts, and lessen the superstitions of other periods and people. He must seek deeply to imbue himself with all the workings of their spiritual nature—what they hoped and what they dreaded—how deep were their terrors, how high their anticipations. It is in the god and the devil of a race that you can behold the truest picture of themselves. Here you may see the extent of their ambition, the degree of purity in their hearts, the things that they are, and the things which are dearest to their pursuit. These subjects, in English history, from the time of the Eighth Henry to the First Stuart, will be best read in the records of the courts, and in the dramatic literature of the same period. They should be studied by him who seeks to turn to account our first American period in history. The analysis of the properties, of the constituents and causes of national character, belongs to the first duties of the philosophical poet, and is absolutely essential to the successful labours of any architect who would build his fabric out of the materials of history. This analysis of the time of which we speak, will lead, as we have already said, to those wonders, crude and shapeless, which, embodied in the faith of the past, may become, made symmetrical by the hands of imaginative art, a wondrous study for the future. The popular credulity is so much fairy-land itself—a land of twilight and uncertain shadows—to every shooting star of which a name and office may be given, and whose phosphorescent *ignés fatui*, may each, in turn, be translated to a star.

Our second period should comprise the history and progress of British settlement down to the accession of George the Third, and to the beginning of those aggressions upon the popular liberties in America, which ended in the revolutionary conflict. It will be readily seen what a marked difference of characteristic is that of this period in comparison with the preceding. The discovery of the country has been made, and there is an end to speculation on the subject of those wonders which the popular credulity of Europe was prepared to see. America was no longer El Dorado! —or, if it was recognized as substantially possessing a claim to be considered a land of golden treasure, it was only among that

sober, second-thoughted few, whose expectations were based upon the effects of sturdy labour and industrious enterprise. The idle exploration which set forth on adventures in the vain hope to realize its own dreams, had given way to a cooler and more reasonable pioneer; and the steel which had been employed by the one for the slaughter of the savage, was employed by the other in laying their forests bare to cultivation. The truth remained—a great truth—but freed from its superstition. The romance which gave impulse to the wing of adventure was happily diminished, and what remained, though of a character which might still excite in a subdued period, was of far more phlegmatic character. But it still possessed the features of romance, was still full of aspects highly novel, persuasive and interesting, to the European. Adventure was no longer a phrenzy. It had become a duty. The explorer did not so much seek for gold, but he sought for that which was still more precious—freedom. It was not the conquest of a mighty empire that was in his aim—it was a home—a secure and happy homestead that won his hopes and stimulated his enterprises. If he no longer went forth glittering in armour, and to the sound of the trumpet, there was yet a stateliness in his simplicity, a nobleness and a majesty in his firm aspect—a glory in his strength and hardihood—a brightness in his hope and a beauty in his faith—such as might well beseem the classical simplicity of subject as chosen by the old Grecian masters—such as might well be chosen to adorn and give dignity to the choicest annals of future song. His career will be found not without its attractions. The adventure of a life in the wilderness—the lonely travel through unbroken forests—the musing upon the tumulus of ancient and unbroken tribes—the conflict with the wolf, and the midnight whoop of the savage—these are all incidents, which, however hacknied they may seem, shall yet be grouped in happiest combination by the hand of genius. The period of which we now speak was full of incident—a rare life, teeming in animation and exertion, derived from sources of this character—from the inevitable progress of the Anglo-Norman—from the inevitable fate of the Indian—a fate as relentless as that of the victim in the Grecian drama, and which, coupled with the history of his own gods, may be wrought into forms as nobly statuesque

as any that drew a nation's homage to the splintered summits of Olympus. Following this almost individual struggle of the white man with the red, a larger field opens upon us. The conflict is no longer individual. New interests have arisen, and Christian Europe finds it politic to send her rival armies across the waters, in search of battle grounds, upon the soil of heathen America. How strange the sight to the savage—that of war to the knife, waged for supremacy between opposing nations in a realm so remote from their own several empires, and upon which they have scarce won foothold. Beneath the same sign of mercy and of blessing, he sees them encounter with hate and curses. He sees, but is not suffered to look on unemployed. He is marshalled in the opposing ranks, and, under the banners of the Cross, the singular and sad spectacle is presented to our eyes of the Christian employing the savage for the murder of his brother Christian. Those old French and Spanish wars, involving the fine trials of strength between Wolfe and Montcalm, the feebler warfare in which Braddock fell, and, nearer home, the frequent conflicts of Virginia, Carolina and Georgia, with the Apala chiantribes, influenced to hostility by the machinations of French and Spanish leaders—are all so many vast treasure-stores of art—stores which you may work upon for ages, yet leave still unexhausted to the workmen of succeeding ages. This period, dating from the settlement of Virginia to the beginning of the popular discontents in the reign of George the Third, will be found to comprise a term of nearly two hundred years.

A third division would cover the preliminaries to the revolutionary war—preliminaries which are not always to be found originating in the aggressions of the British parliament, but will be traced to the increasing power of the colonies, and their reluctance at being officered from abroad—the sentiment of independence growing in their feelings long ere it ripened into thought, and making them jealous of, and hostile to, their foreign governors and officers, long before the popular will had conceived any certain desire of separation. The same period would carry us through the war of the revolution, and include our brief passages of arms with the Barbary powers and with France under the Directory. For the merits of this period, in serving the purposes of art, we have but to

refer you to the partisan conflict in the South—the wars of riflemen and cavalry, the sharp shooter and the hunter, and the terrible civil conflicts of whig and tory, which, for wild incident and daring ferocity, have been surpassed by no events in history.

A fourth and last period would bring us to the present time, include our transition experience from the colonial to the republican condition, illustrate the progress of interior discovery and settlement, comprise our Indian wars, the settlement of Kentucky and Ohio, the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida, the war of 1812 with Great Britain; the conquest of Texas, and the final and complete conversion to the purposes of civilized man, of that vast wild tract, that

"Boundless contiguity of shade,"

spreading away from the Altamaha to the Rio Bravo!

These tracts of time, indicated according to these divisions, may not be equally fruitful and diversified. The materials differ in character, but are in all sufficiently abundant. The future romancer will find them so. With the future Homer, the thousand barbarian tribes by which these woods and wilds were traversed before the coming of our ancestors—their petty wars, their various fortunes, their capricious passions, their dark-eyed women, their favourite warriors—will, like those of Greece, be made immortal on the lips of eternal song. Their dark and gloomy mythologies—not gloomier nor less pleasing than those of the Scandinavian—will receive some softening lights, some subduing touches, from the all-endowing spells of genius, which shall make them quite as imposing, if not so graceful and ethereal, as those of the people who prostrated themselves in worship along the banks of the Peneus. The future descendants of our line, stretching along the great blue heights of the Alleghanies, may be persuaded and fond to believe that they sprang from the loins of two mighty and rival races—the one, the fierce ViKingr of the northern ocean,—and not less fierce but less adventurous, some haughty Mico or Cassique of Apalachy—the Powhatan, the Pontiac, or the Tecumseh of future romance.*

* To those who read and confide in the claims set up by Professor Rafn, and others, to the first discovery and partial settlement of America by the

We leave these speculations for another time. Having indicated our separate eras, as suggestive, each of separate resources, and suitable, severally, for distinct kinds of illustration, we will devote the rest of our essay to a brief examination of such specimens, from these materials, as occur to us, passingly, as proper subjects for the exercise of art. These are by no means limited during the first of our epochs. We consider the whole history of discovery, as commenced by the Northmen, as pursued by Columbus, and followed by the Portuguese and Spanish nations with a religious sort of enthusiasm that partook of the aspects of a sacred fury, to be, in itself, a long and wonderful romance—furnishing resources the most ample, events the most startling—sometimes grand, frequently pathetic and always picturesque and new:—in almost all of their details, suitable for the poet, and requiring for successful elaboration less of genius than of taste. The artist will need to study the events of this period, not as a narrow student of the events themselves, but in all their connections. The collateral histories must be familiar to his mind. He must exercise the philosophic vision which looks deeply down, for the sources of mere facts, into the hearts of the people whom they concern. A profound inquiry into the moral and social characteristics of the several nations engaged in these discoveries—the English, French, Spanish and Portuguese—is an absolutely indispensable preliminary. Above all, he must *feel* their religious characteristics, in his own spirit, before he can boldly enter upon the delineation of the spirit of their time! This, alone, can lead to a just comprehension of their various motives—their strange phrenzies—their implicit faith—their sleepless jealousies—their fanatic enthusiasm—their curious inconsistency of performance—and the singular union, so frequently found in the same personage, of so much that is base and bloody, with so much that is magnanimous and great! With this preparatory knowledge, the artist possesses that "*open sesame*" of character, without which,

Northmen, long before the voyages of Columbus, there is nothing extravagant in this conjecture. On the contrary, the traditions of the northern *savans* are exceedingly plausible, and the poet will make no scruple of insisting upon them if his scheme and genius leads him to their use. The material is susceptible of admirable handling.

as he could not comprehend, himself, he could never make his readers feel, the truth or the propriety of those anomalies which would otherwise be crowded in his story. For there is yet a latent probability at the bottom of all that is extravagant among the absolute performances of man; and it becomes a first duty of the philosophical artist to search out, and to find, this latent probability, as a key positively essential to the analysis of his subject.

IV.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

THE EARLY SPANISH VOYAGERS.—HERNANDO DE SOTO AS A SUBJECT FOR ROMANCE.

From the first dawning of that era of discovery which led the European to our shores, the aspects were strange and strangely beautiful. We may compare them to those of a day, dim, indistinct, perhaps dark with many clouds at first;—illumined only by occasional flashes of summer lightning;—growing gradually clearer with the day's advance,—the clouds passing off slowly to the distant west, and the gay, bright, oriental sun finally looking down, with the smile of a satisfied conqueror, over the new empires which have submitted to his sway. What happy flights of song,—what bursts of admiration,—may be supposed to have flowed from the spontaneous Frenchman as he watched the progress of this day of revelation in the new world;—and how did the solemn and swelling soul of the Spaniard dilate with immeasurable emotions as he sang Te Deum from the wild and narrow heights of Darien. The very conception of such a scene —the presence of the conqueror, not only in a world which he has conquered, but a world which, so far as he knows, has just come from the forming hands of God—looking down upon new oceans,—beholding a new and subject race, approaching him with a reverence which, in turn, almost makes him feel himself a

God!—such a scene is a wondrous story in itself,—a story to burn upon the canvas, and breathe in life and beauty from the chiselled lips of stone! And how many scenes like these—what vast materials are here,—not only for brief description and happy apostrophe, but for elaborate and numerous verse! There are the voyages of Verazzani, of Cartier, of Roberval, of De la Roche, and Champlain;—and the history and fate of the French settlements in Acadie, form a lovely story to themselves which may be made the parent of a race of lovely stories. But a still richer and riper interest attends the history of Spanish discovery in our own immediate neighbourhood.* Conspicuous as the first, Ponce de Leon was not less conspicuous among the discoverers, when we reflect upon the motive of his adventure. In his mind's eye rose ever the image of a mysterious fountain; its springs in earth, its wondrous properties directly caught from Heaven. The fountain of perpetual youth! Waters of life, and youth, and unfading beauty! What a dream of poetry was this!—none more delicious, none more chaste, or noble, in the whole compass of ancient fable. But the dream was a faith in those days, which, if it led not to the thing it fancied, led to objects and discoveries scarcely less wondrous; and the fountain of youth and eternal beauty which inspired the adventure of Ponce de Leon, may not seem wholly an irrational vision if we regard it as an allegory, promising to the nations a new empire for the liberty of the intellectual man. It may be held as the image of other moral objects scarcely less grateful and attractive when we remember that the infant was already in the cradle whose future fearless voice was destined to shake the mitred city upon her seven-hilled foundations.† In those days of gloom, gorgeous and romantic, the image of a glorious fountain rising suddenly upon the landscape, throwing up amidst the dark ancestral shade trees of a thousand years, the gracious and bright waters of a new principle and promise,—drops of pearl and diamond,—drops of fire and of light—sparkling with myriad scintillations,—blessing with freshness, and an odour that might well have been caught from rosy clouds hanging close about the heights of Heaven!—such a fancy

* Speaking for the State of Georgia. † Martin Luther.

might well allegorize and declare the approaching enlargement of the moral aim, and the religious action of the age; and such a fountain might appropriately grow in the new hemisphere, since the spiritual hopes of men depend so greatly upon the political freedom and the social comforts which they are permitted to enjoy. It is from its faith, even in such visions, that a people advances to achievement. It is from such fancies that the poet plucks his richest chaplets of romance and song. His mines of legendary lore are there—his brightest pendants and pearls of fancy!—and there they still lie awaiting his spells to unveil, awaiting his hand to gather,—the waters untasted, the fruits unplucked,—unsought and unregarded—along the melancholy shores of Florida. Shall the witch hazel conduct any of our brothers, in our time, to these precious but unvalued treasures? Shall we see these jewels of Tampa glittering around the brows of our triumphant minstrel? Shall none of us behold,—shall none of us partake them? Will there come after us the Bards who shall grow great and glorious in spoils which might have been ours, and mock that blindness which leaves to them, what had given to us the perfect realization of the very faith which moved the enterprise of Ponce de Leon—youth, life and perpetual beauty? We must not wait for the answer!

The fate of Ponce de Leon—the fading of his dream of youth —the baffling of his fervent and phrenzied hope—the pang of his defeat—the loss of his life,—these are things of which the artist may weave the most beautiful forms and substances which shall delight the souls of coming generations. We pass over the adventures of Diego Miruelo, of Grijalva, and Garay. We must pass without regard other names, which, hereafter, shall be guide-stones to many a buried treasure. We can only sample from the vast masses which lie around us. We linger for an instant upon the two voyages of Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, since his adventures have for us a local interest, and would of themselves furnish materials for a story equally picturesque and tragic. The scene of his story is in our immediate neighbourhood. His business was that of a piracy which cupidity had legalized. He enters the waters of the Combahee in Carolina, beguiles the unsuspecting natives on board his vessel, and suddenly sets sail

carrying two hundred of them into captivity. One of his vessels founders with the loss of crew and captives. Such of the latter as survive are doomed to perpetual bondage in the slave markets of Hayti. But his profits far exceed his losses, and he determines upon a repetition of the game. His honourable achievement is rewarded by his monarch with a commission which confers upon him exclusive powers of robbery along the shores which he has already ravaged. He prepares himself for the conquest of the country, and appropriating his whole fortune to the enterprise, descends with a powerful fleet to his cruel work. But he came not to conquer. He was destined, under the decree of a mightier monarch, to a far different reward. As if by the overruling will of Providence, his largest vessel was stranded in the very river where his first crime had been committed. In the moment of storm and peril, while his people are struggling in the waters of the sea, they are set upon by the natives of the country. Mercy is none for the unmerciful, and the people of Combahee amply avenged themselves in the blood of the pirates. But few escaped the slaughterous hands of the savage, and we may fancy the wild whoop of the red man, as, with hand wreathed in the hair of his victim, and knife at his throat, he recognized the pale features of the mercenary spoiler who had dragged from him, into hopeless foreign captivity, the sister or the brother of his love. The peculiar fate of De Ayllon is left in doubt, but is supposed to have been suited to his deserts. That he perished here is understood. The tradition is that, less fortunate than his comrades, he was made captive by the Indians, and reserved for the terrific horrors of the fiery torture. At all events, whatever may have been the manner of his death, it is involved in that happy obscurity which leaves the poet at perfect liberty so to shape his catastrophe as to adapt it to the general exigencies of his story.

The fortunes of Pamphilo de Narvaez, interesting as they may be made in the hands of a skilful artist, will not detain us; but passing rapidly over our records, we pause and linger upon the history of an expedition, of which, it appears to us, the material for romance is at once conspicuous and complete. Hernando de Soto was an accomplished cavalier and an ambitious warrior. He had won the laurels of battle,—he had won the favours of the

court. He was generally regarded as a fine ideal of the noble Spanish gentleman! A courtier in high esteem, the smiles of beauty had not enfeebled his military enterprise. As a companion of the famous Pizarro, he had acquired high reputation in Peru;—had surpassed his comrades in valour, and returned to Spain equally fortunate in the spoils and the honours of adventure. But these do not suffice. He is unsatisfied. The glorious deeds of Cortes and Pizarro keep him feverish and sleepless; and he is seized with the fancy of finding, in Florida, a second Tenochtitlan or Peru. Florida, in that day, it must be remembered, was considered, *par excellence*, the peculiar world of romance. A melancholy cloud-land it was, not the less suited because it was cloud-land, for the purposes of fiction. Its sun-bright hues and sullen shadows, mingled in singular unison, seemed to promise the possession of vast and mysterious treasures. Washed by the blue waters of the Gulph, itself a wonder—its shores dotted with innumerable little, sudden uprising islands, that lay like so many bright gems along the surface of the deep—its margins covered with rich wild flowers that perfumed the summer breezes an hundred miles from land—its forests, and green tracts of equal sea and forest*—filled with birds of strangest voice and most glorious plumage, that rose in flight, at the approach of the stranger, almost unscared in chattering clouds whose wings seemed borrowed of the rainbow and the sun:—these, and other wondrous peculiarities, were only so many proofs of an indefinite and attractive promise. Surely, said the European,—surely, there are great cities, empires like those of Peru and Mexico, hidden deep among these mighty retreats of shadow. These dark grey mountains along the Apalachian chain, are surely fruitful in the precious minerals and metals! Such were the convictions of De Soto,—and, with a mighty train,—men in armour—shining with the rich plumage and gay panoply of a court,—wearing the spurs of knighthood, and decorated with the favours of beauty—a thousand noble cavaliers!—he set forth, as if upon some pleasant masquerade,—some gay carnival procession —to explore those dark, mysterious forests,—to find out those hid-

* The Everglades.

den cities of the Floridian—to conquer their wild, plume-browed warriors, and to dive, with greedy haste, into the bowels of their treasure-keeping mountains. From first to last, his progress is a long and touching story. Seeking empire, his first step is made upon the neck of affection! He heeds neither the prayers, nor the tears of love, and dreaming only of the sordid objects of his search, he tears himself away from the wife of his bosom. Such are the usual sacrifices which diseased ambition is called upon to make. It is not wealth, nor life merely, that he risks. He sets at hazard the dearer treasures of love in his insane search after more precious jewels,—as if any jewels of the sight deserved to be named as precious with the priceless jewels of the heart! What must have been his parting with that wife! How touching,—if he held in her heart the same high place which he seems to have held in the hearts of all others. She,—sinking forward, sinking downward, in her agony—with outstretched arms, and streaming eyes which vainly strain and follow, long after the white sails have set which bear him forever from her sight. He,—looking only along his path—hurrying his departure,—proud in hope, and flinging from him the sweet restraints of love with as much haste as if they had been so many fetters keeping him back from his true performance. Thus he passes from Cuba to the sea, and our next scene beholds him descending upon the lonely shores of Tampa,—that wild but lovely region, whose subdued but picturesque beauties have been married to a sweet song by one of our own Southern minstrels.* But the plaintive musings of our Bard are not those of the fierce, ambitious Spaniard. The thoughts of De Soto do not dwell on the decay of mortal life, or the disappointments of human hearts. These are musings from which he rather shrinks, whether in scorn or self-rebuke, as by no means suited to the purpose in his soul or the adventure which lies before him. If his mind meditates at all upon the blue waters of the gulf as they break, mournfully sounding, upon

"Tampa's desert strand,"

it is with no moral contemplation. He thinks only of the golden

* Richard Henry Wilde.

treasures which they wash, and of the proud, opulent cities which are supposed to lie, hidden deep, among the far hills and forests from which their tributary streams descend. A fearless and high-spirited warrior, there is a touch of lofty character, visible even in the most mercenary movements of his mind. Uninfluenced by any such necessity as governed Cortes—for the soldiers of De Soto shared in all his hopes and expectations, and eagerly adopted the adventure,—he yet emulates that admirable conqueror in one of the grandest acts of his life. De Soto does not destroy his shipping, but he as effectually deprives himself of its help. He dismisses it,—peremptorily commands its return to Cuba, leaving himself no means of flight. It was not that he distrusted his people or himself. It was in the dilatings of a proud soul that he thus resolved, emulous of a career and deeds like those of Cortes and Pizarro. He will not suffer any feeble longings for home to baffle his ungovernable ambition and, depriving himself of all motive to fear, cutting himself off from all succour, he turns his back upon the vacant sea, and gives the signal for his march to conquest. To this moment, all is bright and encouraging before his eyes. Who, looking on such an array,—a thousand gallant warriors—the very pride and flower of the court of Spain,—could otherwise than feel exultation! With less than one hundred men had Pizarro commenced his march through the empire of the Incas. What was that force to his?—those men, the outcasts, and offscourings of earth, to the high-spirited chivalry which he commanded. He had but to compare them, their character and numbers, to rejoice in all the assurances of hope. He did not ask,—though this inquiry was of the very last importance—whether the people of Apalachia were like the descendants of Manco Capac. He was yet to learn the vast difference between the most timid and the most fearless races in the world;—between the gentle people, whose nature seems to have been drawn in the likeness of their own innocent animal, the Llama,—and that fierce nation, whose kindred tribes, stretching from the mountains of Virginia to those of Guatemala, were as tenacious of their soil, as impatient of intrusion, and as deadly in their blow, as their own emblematic rattle-snake. The Floridian warrior met De Soto on the very threshold of his country, and never failed to meet him at every

step which he took into the interior. The days of the Spaniard, from the first of his landing at Tampa, were numbered by battles —his path-way, every where, was mapped out in blood! Still he marched, still he battled, and still he bled! It was the saddest sort of consolation, to himself and followers, that he always conquered. A conquest which secures nothing but a temporary respite from blows and exertion, is scarcely cause for human exultation.

We follow him through this march of conquest as through the second act of a great drama. He reaches the mountains of Apalachy. He looks down on the waters of the Mississippi. He *finds* a great city!—but not such as were great in Peru!—great in wealth and splendour, the magnitude and durability of their fabrics and the gorgeousness of their materials; but great in great hearts, brave warriors and sagacious men!—a sort of greatness which most effectually baffles the ambition of the adventurer, and subdues the audacity of Spanish knighthood to the unwonted modesty of fear. The stern savages of the Mississippi, while the Spaniards occupy their city from which the proprietors have been expelled, —anticipate that wondrous achievement of the Russian, which, in recent times, baffled the genius of Napoleon and drove him homeward, palsied, panic-stricken, pursued by arrows of ice and fire. In the still hour of midnight, while sleep hangs heavy over the camp of the wearied conquerors, while the sentinels drowse, satisfied that the victory is complete and all is secure,—the brave and still undiscomfited warriors of the Chickasah, gather in silence to their prey. In a moment, at a given signal,—the wild howl of the wolf which calls for the corresponding clamours of the herd,—they surround their enemies and apply the torch to the crowded tenements of thatch and reed. The conquerors awaken in a sea of flame. A sky of fire is above their heads, a bed of fire is beneath their feet, and the terrible war-whoop of the desperate savage, rings, peal upon peal, resounding in their ears. What a scene for the poet and the painter! The fright of the conquerors as they start in terror from their sleep—seeking for flight with outstretched arms—stunned and blinded—running to and fro, amid the flames, pursued by their thousand tongues,— shrieking with feeble cry,—stammering with bewildered question —while, all in vain, the voice of discipline strives to recall and

rally the scattered senses of valour. Over all, that terrible cry prevails—a howl fit only for the midnight—by which the savage increases the terrors of his foe, while announcing his own desperate revenge. Amidst the clamour and confusion, he alone preserves his senses! With busy hand, and greedy hate, and prompt direction, he penetrates the narrow streets. With stone hatchet and shortened lance, he rushes from victim to victim, with a fury as wild as that which his own brands have kindled. He has no mercy in his mood. All is death and vengeance, and the Spaniard can save himself only by the veteran resolution—the better armour—the more efficient weapons of his time and country. That was a night for the painter of the wilder passions!—a night not less terrible and cruel than the famous *triste noche*, so proverbial for the retreat of Cortes over the causeways of Mexico. It will glow upon the canvas a fit parallel with that,—so like it in its cause and consequences—the struggle of the freeman against the tyrant—the citizen against the invader—in both cases, the victim being the Spaniard, and the conqueror, in all probability, the descendant of a common stock. The streets of the Apalachian, traversed by fire and watched by the savage warrior, formed passages as grim with death as the narrow causeways of Mexico, the sluggish lake on either hand, and the fierce Mexican crowding close in his canoe for the first glimpses of the hated fugitive. In both cases, the Spaniard could boast of a victory in his escape. But the victory was like that of Pyrrhus, which leaves the conqueror undone. The scene closes in the momentary triumph of the European—discipline, which succeeds always, enabling De Soto to shake himself free from the flames and from his enemy, and to rally his surviving warriors for newer marches, and perils equally severe.

The last act in the melancholy drama of De Soto's fortunes is at hand. But, even while dying, he is not permitted the mournful consolation of feeling that he remains the conqueror. A messenger from the warriors of Apalachy seeks his bed of death. He comes, as the Spaniard fondly believes, to make submission—to tender the earth and the water of his realm in tribute to the superior genius of European civilization. But he has mistaken the spirit of his foe. Instead of submission,—instead of bent knee and

suppliant aspect—the fearless representative of this fearless race, breathes nothing but defiance! Standing over the miserable couch which sustains the feeble form of the dying Hidalgo, he sounds within his shuddering ear the fearful war whoop of his tribe—that cry so well known, so suddenly heard, so terribly remembered, in the awful conflict of the melancholy night;—then, dashing through the assembled but astounded captains, regains his native wilderness in safety.

What a death bed was that of Hernando de Soto! There, on the banks of the Mississippi—his most memorable discovery—in whose waters he is to find a grave—his hopes baffled—his people thinned by slaughter to a timid, trembling few—conscious himself of approaching death—dreaming no longer of empire and conquest—gold or golden cities—but only how the remnant of his band shall be rescued from the savage! That savage, too, even in that moment, plumed and powerful, bending down above his couch, and shrieking in his ear that proverbial whoop of death which has so often chilled the heart of valour, and palsied the arm of strength. How easy to associate and to contrast this scene with the first;—this scene of hopelessness, defeat and death, with that first setting forth, all music and exultation, of his gorgeous expedition.

But the moral rests not in this single contrast. The eye of the poet will not confine itself to these. He will look above and beyond them. He will go back to the desolate wife,—meek and mournful,—standing on the shores of Cuba, and looking forth, late at evening, for the return of the dusky white sail which her eyes shall never see. Oh! how dearer to him, where he lies, than all his dreams of ambition, were she but nigh in that parting moment—bending over his bed of death, wiping the cold dews from his clammy forehead, and catching the last broken accents of his late returning love!

V.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

THE SETTLEMENTS OF COLIGNY.

Comprehended within the same period of time which we have ventured to describe as the most valuable in all our history for the general purposes of art in fiction, are to be found a series of events, which, as they took place in our own neighbourhood, and seem to be singularly susceptible of poetic arrangement and illustration, will demand our passing consideration. Our allusion now is to the famous settlements—famous because of their objects and melancholy termination—which were made in Florida, under the auspices of Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France. These colonies were composed wholly of that class of religionists who were known as Huguenots—a name, the origin of which, though universally employed then, and since, in designation of this people, is buried in impenetrable obscurity. We take for granted that it will not need that we should dwell upon the history of this people, or upon the particular policy which governed their great leader in determining to plant them in Florida. We have no reason to suppose that a period of such great importance in French history, to say nothing of our own, has been left unexamined by any intelligent American. Enough for us to remind him of the single event that most concerns us,—the fact that such a policy was carried out to experiment,—to a series of experiments,—which, under the most cruel auspices, failed entirely of their expected fruits.

The Huguenots, led by Ribault and Laudonniere, appear to have traversed no inconsiderable portions of Carolina, Georgia and Florida—countries, all of which were, at that time, distinguished by the common name of the latter. Finally, settling on the frontiers of the former State, they proceeded to entrench themselves and to explore the country. These leading facts are suf-

ficiently well known. It is not so well known, however, what a fine series of romances belongs to this history, needing only the most ordinary developments of art, to render them as highly distinguished and delightful as those of any history, the foundations of which were laid in the most adventurous and primitive periods of society. Let us trace, with hurried pencil, the events in this connexion. The spot is chosen for the fortress of our Huguenots —an island in the friendly waters of an Indian territory, to which, from the magnificence of the bay, the French give the name of Port Royal. The fortress of La Caroline springs up amid the shade. Its cannon are mounted, its magazines prepared, its cabins raised, its provisions stored, and then, the duties which he had undertaken being all completed, Ribault departs for France, leaving a small colony of twenty-four men under the command of one Captain Albert. His purpose is to report progress at home, and to return with new supplies. Our interest lies not in his path, along the dark waters of the deep, but lingers over the spot which has so strangely, of a sudden, been transferred from the care of its savage to that of its Christian masters. A colony so small, and so thoroughly isolated from its accustomed world—thousands of miles from home and help, surrounded by herds of savages,—few in number, feeble in resource,—poorly supplied in provisions, and depending, in so many words, purely on themselves for all of comfort and safety they could know—would,—so one might reasonably suppose,—harmonize in their objects, and yield a hearty and affectionate support to the common interests. This would seem to be due equally to the social tendencies, as to the obvious necessity, for security, of a perfect and habitual unanimity among them. Such, however, was not the case. It is not so sure, at this late period, and in the imperfect condition of our authorities, where and with whom the error lay by which this hopeful scheme was defeated. By the colonists themselves, such as survived the expedition, the guilt of its failure is ascribed to their superior. Albert, their Captain, seems to have been one of those ordinary men whom it is easy to spoil by elevation. He soon converts his authority into a despotism. With a feeble and wanton passion for the display of his power,—under some slight provocation,—he singles out one of his men, who happens to be a favourite

among the people, as a proper object for its exercise; and subjects him to a penalty,—something short of death, indeed, but which, in the condition of the colony, seems to have been worse than death itself. At least, it appears to have been thought so. He sends the offender into banishment. He is exiled from his Christian comrades, consigned to the dangers from wild beasts of the forest, or to dangers scarcely less terrible, at the hands of the capricious savage. It is the cruel resolve of Albert that he shall perish. No food is allowed him beyond the supply for a few days, with which he is furnished when first expelled from the walls of La Caroline; and his comrades are forbidden, under like penalties, to extend him any relief. It is the hope and the conviction of the cruel despot, that his victim must die of starvation. He is deceived;—he lives. He is provided against hunger,—he is consoled by society. We know this from the chronicles, but nothing farther. The poet alone, or the romancer, can declare boldly by whom he is succoured—who brings him nourishment and food,—who cheers him in the lonely haunts of the forest, who encourages him to live and to hope, in despite and defiance of that tyrant who had decreed that he should despair and die. Was not his exile shared by some gentle damsel of the woods—some Pocahontas of St. Helena—nay, was it not because of the smiles of some such bright humanity that he first suffers the doom of banishment. There is some faint tradition that will justify this conjecture. Now,—should the poet ever avail himself of this suggestion—should he venture, in song, to insist upon this, as, in truth, the history, where is the Niebuhr to start up and gainsay it with a solemn chronicle? Where is the critic who, if the artist shall have performed his work with reasonable skill, shall dare to insinuate a doubt of his veracity? It is by the excellence of the art that the fiction is converted into truth; and all malleable conjecture, not conflicting with the unquestionable and the known, is truth sufficient for all the purposes of poetry.

But the exile is consoled and succoured—we will suppose, in the absence of any certain particulars, by the sympathies of the Indian damsel. But this is not all—he is avenged. Hated by his commander, he had qualities to endear him to his comrades as well as to the dusky beauty of the savage. They rise in arms

against the tyranny which oppresses them, and Albert perishes in the conflict which ensues.

Such a story might end here. Properly grouped, and with the addition of such other persons of the drama as the action must have possessed,—though history does not deem it necessary to record their names—and the parts have quite a dramatic finish, and maintain the epic fitness and dependency. The action being single, that of the recall of the banished man from exile, and the overthrow of the oppressor, affords the happiest opportunity to the artist to introduce and ally with the events, whatever adjuncts of terror or of tenderness he pleases. Captivity by the Indians, his rescue by the dusky maiden,—their mutual loves,—the jealousy of Albert, etc.,—these are all topics which suggest themselves naturally for employment, in the development of this little history, in a form either narrative or dramatic.

But this story of Albert forms but a single scene in this domestic history. The residue, if less dramatic, will prove itself scarcely less full of susceptibilities for other forms of art. Let us continue the narrative. Albert being slain, the insurgents choose a successor; but this event, though it quiets the strifes among themselves, is very far from bringing peace to the little colony. Their exile has been protracted—their supplies from France have failed them—they have made enemies among the Indians, and, yearning with the *maladie du pays*, they resolve upon returning to their European home. But how? They are without ships and without architects. But where the inclinations of the heart are fervent, the mind readily furnishes, in most cases within human power, the agents by which its desires may be realized. The simple narrative which tells us of the modes and substitutes which they employed in building and rigging up their little brigantine, with which to traverse the long ways of the Atlantic, is pleasingly pathetic. How, without artificers of any kind, they yet ventured upon one of the most noble of the mechanic arts. How they gathered from the oaks the moss, and from the pines the resin, with which to make tight the seams of their vessel—how the Indians brought them cordage for tackle, made doubtlessly out of moss also;—and how their own garments furnished the frail canvas. These are all minutiæ which, however

work upon our sympathies with an influence such as belongs to the pages of that dear little book of details, the Robinson Crusoe of our childhood. Drunken with joy, according to the old chronicler—a joy that grew out of the simple fact that they had once more turned their eyes in the direction of *La belle France*,—they put to sea, rashly, like greedy and thoughtless children, without any adequate supply of food, without giving any heed to the aspects of wind and weather. The usual narrative of ocean caprice ensues. Tossed about and baffled by storm,—out of provisions and out of water—despair seizes upon their hearts; and here follows one of those terrible events which we shudder to imagine can ever occur to add to the thousand humiliations which sometimes track the footsteps of unfortunate humanity—

> "Savagely
> They glared upon each other—all was done—
> Water and wine and food—and you might see
> The longings of the cannibal arise,
> (Although they spoke not,) in their wolfish eyes."

One of their number is demanded, as a victim, to pacify the now frenzied appetites of the famished wretches who remain.—

> "At length one whisper'd his companion, who
> Whispered another, and thus it went around,
> And then into a hoarser murmur grew
> An ominous, and wild and desperate sound;
> And when his comrade's thought each suff'rer knew,
> 'Twas but his own, suppress'd till now, he found;
> And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
> And who should die to be his fellow's food."

Lots were not necessary in the present instance. The brave fellow whom they had rescued from the tyranny of Albert, proves his gratitude, and justifies the interest which they had shown in his behalf, by voluntarily subjecting his own bosom to the knife. Here is the exhibition of a magnanimous soul, surrounded by terror and agony, yet rising up without fear, and utterly superior to both. What a model of manly defiance, and strength of heart, for the genius of painting or sculpture,—what a scene for Michael Angelo or Fuseli. How the poet of the terrific and intenser pas-

sions, Milton or Danté, would have given this terrible scene, in a few bold touches, as Byron has given it in details. What a picture of the wild phrenzies of the heart—its deep desolation—its fierce despair—its degrading willingness to prolong life on any terms,—and its individual example, worthy of record in all ages, of that sublime resignation of soul, which scorns to struggle against fate with the impotent blindness of fear, and disdains the life which can only be preserved by a loathsome sacrifice of all its humanity. The offer of the victim is accepted. The sacrifice of their brave companion is made; and, strange to say, these miserable outcast Huguenots—denied, as it would seem, by the shores of two continents—finally reach Europe in safety.

But this issue does not conclude the enterprise, the history of which is much more full of the tragic than has been shown already. Ignorant of the fate of the former, and too late to afford them succour, a second colony repairs to La Caroline. Laudonniere, their new Captain, finding the place abandoned, is discouraged from any attempt to renew the settlement in the same spot. He views it as of evil omen, and, proceeding farther south, builds a second fortress, and the Indians, as in the case of his predecessor, gather to his assistance. An error in his policy and humanity, is yet a source of poetic and romantic material, which the imaginative writer will readily conceive. Laudonniere foments wars among the natives, selects one tribe for his alliance, lends the force of his arms to the support of one faction against another, and converts crowds of willing friends into troops of watchful enemies. It is not easy to secure the affections even of the tribe which he sustains. The Indians withhold their supplies, and his people suffer accordingly. Insurrection, among them, is the natural fruit of privation. They conspire against him—penetrate his tent in armour, at midnight—drag him on shipboard, and, with weapon at his throat, extort from him a regular commission of piracy. How they coursed, whom they captured, and by what means they were finally destroyed, are all facts of curious interest and value which may be found in the record. It is not for us to dwell more particularly on them, or to do more than suggest their susceptibilities. It needs not even that we should say, that—in the materials indicated,—in the novelty of

the events—their exciting character,—the daring temper of the persons concerned,—the various passions brought into play, and the final and highly tragic issue which closed the deeds of the adventurers—to say nothing of the privileges afforded by that condition of palpable obscure which is due to the absence of all details—will be found all the resources and facilities, which, in the case of preceding histories, have been as the canvas and the colour in the hands of the successful artist.

But the truly sublime and terrible catastrophe to this sad tale of colonial enterprise, is yet to follow. The closing portion of this history is one of peculiar grandeur—bright with a lurid sort of brightness,—a strange, wild mixture of glare and gloom, such as startles us at first, then half offends and repels, and half delights, in the audacious pictures of John Martin. We have said that the colonists of the French were Huguenots—another name for a sect of religionists professing the protestant faith. We need not remind the reader of history, of the melancholy truth, that religious conflicts are, of all others, distinguished by the most shocking disregard of all the principles and precepts of humanity. That these poor adventurers were protestants and French, were twofold reasons why they should be put under the ban of the Spanish Catholics, by whom, in the name of Spain, a vague title was asserted to the whole of the vast country, into a few acres of which they had driven their stakes. This claim was now to be asserted, and this hate satisfied, by deeds which seem to have been almost peculiar to the Spanish practice in America. There was a famous, or rather an infamous, Captain of that time—a man, cold, dark and designing, who was chosen to assert the rights and the religion of Spain, in reference to the Huguenot settlers in Florida. Brave, indeed, as was unquestionably the Spanish distinction in those days, this man was totally wanting in those gentler graces of character which subdue the asperities of valour, and soothe, where they cannot soften, the severities of war. Pedro Melendez was not less a bigot in religion, because he had been heavily amerced for crime. He prepared to atone, to his king and his religion, by the commission of a darker crime than any in the already long black catalogue of his past offences. He descended upon the Huguenot settlement with a superior

power. Unhappily, the forces of the latter were divided. One portion maintained their fortress, while another, and the larger, kept the sea. The fierce valour of Melendez, aided by a cruel fortune, and stimulated by the fierce fanaticism of religious hate, enables him to storm the fortress. That he conquers, offers no reason to his bigot nature, why he should spare his foes. Such of them as escape the sword in the assault, and yield to his mercy, are hurried to the neighbouring tree. None were permitted to live who confided to his faith. In this bloody manner nearly two hundred persons perished. This *auto da fé* accomplished, High Mass was celebrated upon the scene of massacre; and while the earth was yet smoking with the blood of the innocent, the place was dedicated to God by this miserable butcher!

The fate of those who had sought safety on the seas, was not more fortunate. Pursued by the Spanish armament, and scattered by storm, they abandoned their stranded vessels and sought safety along the shore. They had weapons in their hands, they could fight, they were still free, and resolved with desperate valour that they would die like men. It was in an evil hour that they altered this resolve. But the constant pressure of ill fortune had chilled their hearts and subdued the courage in their souls. They hearkened to, they treated with, the murderer. They knew and feared his faithlessness, yet they listened to his words. The false-hearted Spaniard invited them to seek his mercy. A few of them suspected, as well they might, the value of his assurances. These held themselves aloof, and found their safety only as they did so. The greater number, worn with toil, sinking from famine, and hopeless of better things, resigned themselves to their fate, rather than prolong the exhausting conflict with necessity. They complied with the invitation of the Spaniard to treat for their surrender. A curious scene now followed. A small river ran between the opposing armies, while the conference between their chiefs proceeded on its banks. On one side stood Melendez, sternly phlegmatic, coldly resolute in all his requisitions. He provides a boat, and offers to the French officers every facility for passing to and fro, while the treaty is in progress. Nay, he even goes farther—he sets food and refreshments before them, and, with a rare exhibition of the demoniac spirit,

he conducts them to the plain where lie the carcasses of their comrades, yet ungathered, in their gore; and, after all, coldly requires that they shall confide in his mercy—that mercy, of which, he himself, in the same moment, affords them the most terrible spectacle. In vain do they expostulate. He demands that they shall surrender at discretion. Certainly, with this bloody evidence before their eyes, it was the strangest fatuity, that which prompted them to give ear, for a single instant, to the cruel monster. But that despair which enfeebles the heart, asserts a still more tyrannical force upon the judgment. Perhaps they even gathered hope from that frank exhibition which he presented them of his former cruelties. It would seem by this that he meant to say, "my anger is pacified." At all events, by whatever process of thought they were persuaded to a compliance with his will, it is very certain that they yielded for themselves and people. In small detachments, just so many as the boat can carry, they are ferried across the river. Each division, as it arrives, is conducted out of sight, to the plain where their comrades were butchered, and there, man by man, subjected to the same bloody doom. Melendez superintends the execution. He is described as deliberately drawing, with his cane, a line along the sands, and thus designating the precise spot where the butchery must be done. He has no relentings. No generous impulses soften his stony heart, at any moment, in this dreadful execution. He spares none—placidly superintends the crime till it is finally complete in the silence of the last expiring victim, and turns away with the spirit of one well satisfied that he has done a work as acceptable to Heaven, as it was to the kindred soul of his sovereign.

It is grateful to know that all were not thus confiding—that all did not perish in this wretched manner, the tame victims to their own imbecility and the tiger fury of their foe. One small body of men, endowed with a nobler spirit than their comrades, confiding to their own weapons rather than to the words of the Spaniard, compelled him to terms of safety and comparative indulgence. Another band of twenty men, following the suggestions of their brave captain, disdaining the terms which their comrades had secured—perhaps, and properly, despising their securities—preferred rather

to trust themselves to the deep thickets of the wilderness, with all their savage possessors, than the faith of their Christian enemies. Separating themselves from those who submitted, they disappeared from sight. The Spaniards sought for them in vain. Their farther history is a blank. They were never heard of more! What was the fate of this little band of Huguenots? There may be an answer, hereafter, to this question. It may be that their probable fortunes, rich in variety of adventure, and glorious by the golden tints of romance, shall yet delight the fancies of our children. *They* may be made to see, in all the colours of the Epic muse, that terrific picture of sacrifice which we have feebly shown —that strange, dark strife—so cruel yet so picturesque. In the fore-ground, that fierce fanatic warrior, standing, cane in hand, upon the shores of the San Matheo, and marking along the sand that slight but dreadfully intelligible line, to be afterwards made more legible in blood. In the distance, the little boat bringing the captive Frenchmen, ten by ten, little dreaming of the fate that awaits them, unconscious, like sheep to the slaughter, moving on to perish by sudden stroke where that unseen line is drawn.

It is something to know that this massacre was avenged. The soul feels a fierce delight, which even Christian tuition does not always subdue, when it is told of the vindictive retribution which follows the deeds of the cruel upon the unoffending. Man's blood, shed by his brother, does not often cry in vain to Heaven! A hero as religiously resolute in vengeance as Melendez had been in crime, took upon him the work of retribution, and carried out the ends of justice, in punishment, upon the murderers. The single spirit of retributive justice by which the valiant Gascon, Dominique de Gorgues, was led to peril himself in battle with the Spaniards of Florida, to forfeit the protection of his own country, and win the admiration of all the states of Christendom but Spain, has given him a rank in chivalry not inferior to that of Bayard and Duguesclin. It might be no difficult matter, even now, to make his deeds the subject of story, and himself the hero of an epic song!

We must not linger upon this period, nor dilate upon its incidents, passionate and touching though they be. If we insist that there are thousands such during this epoch in our history, we deal in

no unfounded exaggerations. It would be easy for the romancer even now—the poet—such poets as we already possess—pursuing the proper methods, devoting himself, soul and body, to his art, and properly sustained by the sympathies, and encouraged by the obvious wants of the people, to work such details into a thousand exquisite and truthful fictions. He need not turn his eyes for the crude material to the obscure chronicles of foreign lands. That which we possess, is not less susceptible of artistic elaboration; nay, in many instances, it is not only quite as good as the exotic, but rudely developed in the block, and ready to our hands. The outline of the statue is already in the stone—the image is half starting from the shade, and the divine conception looks out from its cloud, with eyes of sweetest soliciting, only waiting for the endowing hands of art to become a living and a loving soul. The studies yielded to the master of fiction by our moral progress, are not less numerous than those which the painter may gather, on every hand, from the matchless forest land through which he wanders. He has but to follow a like direction—to cut away the under-growth—to cast down the offensive and obtrusive object—to bring out into bolder relief such forms as merit to be made particular—to be raised into superiority, and elevated by appropriate tributaries—and the work is done as he could wish it. The creation is here—already in our possession!—it is the *clearing*—the *clearing* only—which has need to follow.

VI.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

POCAHONTAS: A SUBJECT FOR THE HISTORICAL PAINTER.

We have already dwelt so long upon the events of the previous periods, that we shall be compelled to hurry somewhat rapidly over those which remain. It will be conjectured, from what has been already said of the characteristics of this epoch, that we regard its materials, not only as decidedly superior, at present, to

those which follow, but as being quite as much adapted, even now, to the purposes of fiction as those of any other history. The events are equally curious and copious, full of vivacity, and glowing with the most various and striking traits of human passion and performance. Leading personages may be found in their development, endowed with all those attributes of character which constitute the moral of the heroic. Their deeds provide as noble and imposing action as romance has ever esteemed the most proper upon which to build her inventions of "lofty rhyme" and "stately tragedy,"—and there is quite enough, in the detail, of that ductile obscurity, which we have insisted upon as so necessary to the full exercise of all the privilèges which are asked by the original artist. We commend the study of this period, down to the date of English settlement in Virginia, to the peculiar care of the American student—satisfied, as we are, that he cannot fail to find among its chronicles a body of crude material, virgin and fertile, fresh and blooming with the beauty of its dawning youth, and susceptible to all the maternal uses which grow naturally from the embrace of the prolific genius.

The epoch which follows is one of more narrow privileges, circumscribing our progress by the absolute and well known in those facts, which are of value in proportion to their obscurity, quite as much as because of their intrinsic capabilities. Its aspects are sharper and more repulsive—its outlines more decisive and angular—its incidents too clearly stated upon the record, and abridged by those definitive boundaries of the real, which impair the courage of him who seeks after the ideal. The softening effects of distance, and the mellowing influence of time, are equally needed to reconcile us perfectly to the beautiful in its aspects, and the pliant and the graceful in its forms. There are intrinsic deficiencies also. We feel, as we examine the moral of its history, that a harsher and a severer judgment has made its way among men, lessening their faith in the fancies of the past, disparaging authority and tradition, and disturbing that repose among ancient things in which the meditative and endowing genius takes most of its delight. Chivalry had given way to more mortal politics, and, standing in the presence and beneath the freezing countenance of the bigoted Philip of Spain, or wearied

with the caprices of one quite as selfish, if less bigoted—Elizabeth of England—we feel those frigid influences which were destined to pass like a blight over the social character of Europe. Not that we mean, now, to indicate any preference, except in a simple reference to the objects of art in fiction, for the condition of the social world in the days of chivalry over those of the reformers of the Christian Church. On the contrary, the study of the middle ages, obliges us to conclude with Sismondi, in disregard of Burke—"*Cet heroism universel, nous avons nomme la chevalerie n'exista jamais commes fictions brillantes.*" But it is precisely because of the paralyzing influence of these and other powers, upon the habits and condition of the world, then and afterwards, that we are made conscious of the want of the proper materials for a fiction as brilliant as was found, the spontaneous production of society, in the previous epochs of its history. We have now reached a period when commerce begins to assert a claim to be an estate among those long before acknowledged among the powers of Christendom—helped wonderfully in the assertion of this claim by the sudden and surprising progress of maritime discovery. We are on the eve of those great social and moral changes which led to the catastrophe in the career of Walter Raleigh—to the heartless and senseless profligacy of the Stuarts—to the substitution, in England, of French for English poetry—the clinquant of a false, for the hearty ring of the genuine metal—and—not to class things so utterly dissimilar in every point of view—the anomalous growth of the demure and sly, the daring but calculating ambition of the Puritans. Virginia has been discovered, named and colonized—inadequately colonized, as were all of the settlements in America;—a fact which led to that deplorable waste of blood and treasure, that prolonged struggle in arms, which naturally ensued from the painful contest for ascendancy, between the red men of the country and their pale invaders. But this, which provokes the censure of the philosophical statesman, as the very last of social misfortunes, is hailed as a source of invention and exercise by the professor of art in fiction. A vast store-house of material is laid open to us by the struggles between these warring races; and over its heaps the future genius of our romance shall hang with the fond avidity of him who gloats above

the discovery of an unknown treasure. Our limits will not suffice to enable us to indicate more than a single topic in the history of our sister State; but this shall be one admirably adapted to the purposes of poetry and art. This story is that of Pocahontas, with which every native is familiar. It is one which has been frequently attempted, and unhappily, in most cases, by very feeble hands. It has never been put to proper use by the pen or pencil of any; yet there is scarcely one, in all our history, at this second period of which we speak, which seems to us better adapted to the equal purposes of the painter and the poet. Let us endeavour to sketch from it a single scene for each. The painter, it must be remembered, has but a moment of time for his delineations—but a single moment—and if he fails so to select this moment as to compel the picture to tell its own story, the subordinate merits of exquisite elaboration will not avail to maintain his claims as a *builder* and a master. The dramatic requisitions of his art—which are the most stringent, for the just reason that the department which delineates human passion is necessarily the most noble—require that he shall seize upon that moment in the event he seeks to celebrate, which, because of the intenseness of the interest felt by the several parties to his group, shall present the spectator with the most impressive and intelligible action. It is when the struggle is at its height, when face and form, and eye and muscle, in each of the dramatis personæ, are wrought upon by the extremity of the action—when the crisis is reached of human hope, or fear, or endurance, and nothing that follows, can, by any possibility, add to the acuteness of that anxiety with which the beholder watches the scene—that the artist must snatch the occasion to stamp the story in life-like colours upon the canvas. It is the judgment which he exhibits in this particular—in thus choosing his moment—in the sensibility and the imagination which prompt him to catch the vivid emotion and the hungry passion, ere they subside into the repose which follows from natural exhaustion—that he establishes his pretensions as the poet of his art. To show his story at the extreme and doubtful instant, when hope can no longer admit of increase, when fear can bear nothing more without pain, and both, in the spectator, begin to merge in that anxiety to behold an issue, the approaches to which he can no

longer endure without suffering too deeply for any sentiment of pleasure—this is the great merit which places the dramatic painter far above all other professors in his art. That moment, in the history of Pocahontas, is when Smith is rescued by her interposition from the stroke of the executioner. Our artists, generally, have shrunk from this subject. We know not one, endowed with any of the necessary attributes of genius, taste and imagination, by whom it has been attempted.

Mr. Chapman, a southern artist, whose large and peculiar merits it gives us pleasure to acknowledge and assert, has given us a lovely picture of the reception of the Indian princess into the bosom of the Mother Church ; but it is to the reproach of this gentleman* that he has avoided the nobler event which first brought us to the knowledge of her character. Certainly, it is one of singular difficulty, demanding the highest powers of art, and an imagination equally warm and courageous, to say nothing of the inevitable requisites of the exquisite colorist and draughtsman ; but it is this very difficulty, and the danger which attends it, which commend the subject to the affections, and stimulates the ambition of the proper genius. He, therefore, whether painter or poet, who shrinks from the task because of its hardships or its dangers, has a better reason for his timidity in the absence of his capacity. He is not the genius to obtain a mastery over the grand —not the soul to conceive what belongs to the sublime and the majestic—not that seer who alone carries the true divining rod—upon whose eye the dim creation of the mind irresistibly fixes itself, not only as the unavoidable presence, but as one which can be treated only in one manner. It is when the subject forces

* Mr. Chapman is one of our best painters. He has a vivacious and an abundant fancy, an exquisite taste, and more industry than half of our artists put together. We are indebted to him for several Indian pictures, in all of which he has been singularly successful. But his genius inclines him rather to the pleasing than the passionate—rather to the soliciting and the sweet in nature, than the stern and terrible. Pocahontas, entering the English settlements at night to warn the colonists of the intended massacre—or the same lovely creature made captive by the artifice of Argall and the treachery of Japazaws—would be subjects more agreeable to his genius, than the terrible scene in which she rescues Smith. Still, we should like to see the attempt, made by his hands, upon this difficult but noble subject.

itself, with all its particular aspects, unchangeably, before the eye of the imagination, that we can be altogether sure of its grandeur, its efficacy, and the propriety of that attempt which seeks to embody it in physical material in the sight of eyes to whom its beauties never came before even in their dreams.

Let us now endeavour to suggest this event by a skeleton draught of its deeper outlines—to sketch this picture, feebly of course, and very faintly—in crayons rather than in oil—but sufficiently, we trust, to commend it to those by whom the elaborate achievement may yet be wrought. We trust, in what we say, to make good the assurance with which we set out, that the subject of Pocahontas, rescuing Smith from the executioner, is worthy of the great historical painter.

Our back-ground is one familiar to you all. It lies in the unbroken forest, yet undishonoured by the axe. Great oaks, moss-bearded and grand, like Hebrew prophets and patriarchs, stretch their shadowy arms above the scene. Gigantic pines group themselves behind them, and tower up and away in emulation of the hills. There you may see the green vine gadding from bough to bough ;—the green thickets are burdened with the weight of blossoms which persuade us that the atmosphere is faint with a sweetness all its own. The sward is similarly rich beneath our feet—a carpet of emerald with tiny flowers, purple and yellow, here and there saddening into brown under the melancholy smiles of autumn. Such is our landscape, the still life present, unavoidably perceptible, but not in its details, and only as subordinate to the human action. *That* fixes and fascinates the glance. There we see, crowding the intervals beneath the trees of the forest, a thousand human forms—the wild people of the woods—stern and dark, proud and fiercely frowning warriors, armed after their own fashion, looking the more terrible, perhaps, because of the absence of all armour ;—with—only half seen among the groups—some less dusky visage which heaven has benignly touched with features of more human sweetness. Woman appears upon the scene, half shrinking back even while she advances, as fearing to be seen while anxious to see ;—and boyhood stands forward, eagerly, before all the rest. Curiosity is in all, anger and exultation in many, faces. All eyes turn to one centre, where, conspicuous in the fore-ground

—the sunlight streaming down through a broad opening of that natural amphitheatre upon the spot—lies one

"Destined to make an *Indian* holiday."

It is the pale, the European face, that lies beneath that oppressive sunlight. The captive is bound and prostrate upon the earth—the strong man, conscious of all his strength, in the same moment in which he feels all its impotency. He constitutes the centre of that eager group that fascinates every glance—to whom every eye addresses itself—some with hate and eager ferocity, some with curiosity simply, and, possibly, some few with pity and regret. Perfectly helpless, quite hopeless, his face turns upward to that sun which is about to set forever on his sight. Such, at least, is his conviction. The pity which has power to save rises not in that dark assemblage; and he has prepared himself with the courage of the soldier, and the patient confidence of the Christian, to await the cruel death which hangs above his head. His manly cheek does not pale with apprehension. His eagle eye makes no appeal for mercy, and, when his lips unclose, it is only to utter themselves in the language of defiance. His muscular form, though fettered with gyves from the neighbouring vines, subsides nevertheless into an attitude of grace, consistent with the reputation of the courtier. Patiently he awaits the stroke of death. A jagged rock sustains his head. The executioner stands above him with his mace—a stalwart savage, who has no shrinkings of the heart or muscles—who will be only too happy when bade to strike—who will drink in, with a fierce phrenzy, the groans of the victim—nay, bury his hand within his bosom and pluck the heart from its quivering abode, while life yet speaks in the pulses of the dying man! *He* waits, he looks, with impatience to the savage monarch for the signal when to strike. That signal is made—the word is spoken!—

"The arm that holds the mace is bending,
The heavy stroke of death descending."

What arrests the blow? Why does the eager savage, anxious for blood, panting for vengeance, forbear to execute the bidding of

his cruel sovereign? Lo! the miracle, at once, of loveliness and mercy! What has arrested the stroke of the murderer, so frequently, and in all lands and ages? What, but the interposition of an angel! A form of light—that loveliest creation of mortal beauty, a young girl just budding into womanhood—is this interposing angel. With what a sinking, terror-stricken heart, has she sat at her father's feet, watching the whole dark proceedings. What a strife has been in progress the while, between her timid sex and years, and the holy strength of maternal nature in her heart. The maternal nature is at last triumphant. She darts from her seat—voiceless—gasping with new and convulsive emotions, which lead her, she knows not whither, while she flings herself between the captive and the blow. One arm is thrown upward to prevent the stroke—one covers the head of the victim—while her dilating but tearless eyes, turn in fear and entreaty to the spot where sits the fierce old monarch, Powhatan! This is the moment of time for the painter. It is the crisis in the fortunes of the scene. Will the interposition of that angel prevail—will the sire relent—will they not drag her from the prisoner, heedless of her entreaties—heedless of her shrieks and prayers? These are the enquiries in every face. All eyes turn with hers to the rock where the monarch sits—all eyes, but those of the captive! *He* looks only upon *her*. He has forgotten that he is to die in the advent of that unexpected vision of light and beauty. A pleasing wonder is in his heart—he doubts, indeed, whether the blessed form has not really descended from the skies; and his memory carries him backward to the days when a like vision of beauty in the east, once cheered him with delivery even in a moment of trial as terrible as that which still hangs above him in the west. From this recollection he gathers hope and heart, and the most assuring auguries—and they do not betray him!

And what of Powhatan, that hard-souled, iron-browed old despot! What are his emotions? He has started from his seat. The conflict in his soul speaks fully out in his countenance. To be thwarted in his vengeance, and by a child, is something new in his experience! But the child is *his* child, and *such* a child! Her sweet nature is written in her most innocent deeds. He looks upon her kneeling form, and his face is full of surprise and anger.

His right foot is thrown behind him—his arm, grasping the tomahawk, is uplifted to strike—his form swings upon its centre, to give fatal impetus to the blow! Shall he strike or spare? Here is another issue of doubt and curiosity, most favourable to the painter. How shall the question be determined? What hopes, what fears, depend upon this question. What feelings of vengeance and of mercy, of hate and tenderness, are in conflict. How completely would such a picture, though grasping but a single moment of time, tell its own history! Need we say that the angel of mercy must finally prevail?

With these, our examples must conclude. Our limits do not suffer us to carry out our first design of presenting such an analysis of this delightful story, as would show its admirable susceptibility for poetic illustration. For the border romance—the free and easy narrative of the wild and startling, such as Scott has rendered so familiar to us, in that happy combination of the epic and the ballad which is destined to a long association with his peculiar genius—the life of the Virginia princess furnishes other materials like this, and not much inferior to it in dramatic respects —which are fully equal, in intrinsic capabilities, to any of those which have been employed by Scott. The tone of the story may be pitched with that of the Lady of the Lake—the characteristics of the people and the country are not dissimilar—but the events in our Virginia legend are of a nobler sort; and the wretched failures which have followed every attempt to work them into song, are due entirely to the inadequacy of those writers who have presumptuously addressed themselves to the task. When our people shall really have acquired some intellectual appetites in sufficient number to make and mould the popular taste; and books shall have become an aliment as absolutely necessary to us as brandy and tobacco—we shall then have the poet and the song. The laws of demand and supply govern this subject, in most of its respects, as thoroughly as they govern in the market place. It is a consoling part of the faith which it is the purpose of these papers to teach, that we shall not always slumber—that we are at last to have an awakening—not, certainly, to be put off to the indefinite period of the *Greek Kalends*.

It needs not that we should review the remaining periods of

time which have been assigned to the materials of our history, in considering them with regard to their susceptibility for the purposes of art. We have not the leisure for this task, nor, indeed, is it at all essential to our purpose. Having already indicated the disabilities of these epochs, in general terms, such a performance would seem unnecessary—the more particularly, indeed, as the task would be endless of sampling from our staples, and distinguishing the most eligible and excellent for the use of the artist. Besides, the independence of character which every where makes the individual mind, would render this a gratuitous and unwelcome labour. The subject must suggest its own modes of treatment to him who conceives it. What would strike one mind as singularly suitable for the uses of the artist, would scarcely commend itself to the peculiar genius of another. Of these periods, therefore, which we leave unexamined, it will suffice to say, that, however inferior to the two first, they are yet very far from deficient in that boldness of event, and warmth of colouring, which are demanded by the worker in the fields of fiction. Their chief difficulties lie, as we have said before, in their too close proximity to our own time. But these difficulties are neither permanent in their duration, nor total in their exactions. It would be easy to enumerate hundreds of events, in the wars of the Revolution, which would amply answer for the experiments of novelist and poet. Partisan warfare, itself, is that irregular and desultory sort of life, which is unavoidably suggestive of the deeds and feelings of chivalry—such as gave the peculiar character, and much of the charm, to the history of the middle ages. The sudden onslaught—the retreat as sudden—the midnight tramp—the moonlight *bivouack*—the swift surprise, the desperate defence—the cruel slaughter and the headlong flight—and, amid the fierce and bitter warfare, always, like a sweet star shining above the gloom, the faithful love, the constant prayer, the devoted homage and fond allegiance of the maiden heart! These are all to be made available, as the ordinary characteristics—all of them highly susceptible of the uses of romance—which must inevitably distinguish a domestic warfare carried on in a country such as ours—full of forests, sparse of population—where the march must needs be wearisome and long—where the foragers must

wander far in search of provisions with dangers necessarily increasing at every mile in their progress, and where no army can be secure from capital misfortunes, even through a single night, unless by an equally stern energy and a sleepless vigilance. The comparison of such a warfare to that of the middle ages, derives no small additional force from the fact that so much of it must needs be performed on horseback. The partisan warrior combines, in his own person, the man at arms and the bowman of ancient chivalry. He is at once the cavalier and rifleman, uniting in himself the eye and the wing of battle, having the unerring and fatal directness of the one, with the untiring velocity of the other.

It will have been seen, in the progress of these pages, that we have confined our examination entirely to such events as have taken place within our own geographical limits. We have, in order to take the subject in its least copious and least prepossessing aspects, recognized the political boundaries of our republic as boundaries also for its muse! We have not yielded any consideration to the vast resources, for the artist who works in the realm of fiction, which lie, broadcast, among the countries between us and the Pacific. Peru with her wealth of tradition and history—Mexico with her pictured treasures—and the collateral and dependent provinces, many of which possessed a sway and a story which may be yet found to be very far superior even to those which we find so wonderful in the greater states by which they were afterwards overshadowed. These are empires which, in future days, shall be far more prosperous and productive in the hands of fiction, than they were in the iron grasp of their Spanish conquerors. Nor has that race, rapidly tending to the chambers of the setting sun, but still lingering like a mournful shadow upon our horizon, left the student of the muse no treasures. Their melancholy story, even in our own day, will yield to the gleaner the living sweetness of some touching song. As yet we do no justice to this material. We see nothing but the squalid poverty, the wretched destitution, and the baser passions of this failing race. We have yet to learn the truth in regard to their characteristics, in many particulars equally important to the poet and the philosopher. We are burdened with many conflicting and

false ideas of their moral and social constitution, which have hitherto furnished barriers, and not helps, to the progress of discovery. With solemn gravity we have pronounced upon their insensibility to the ordinary passions of mankind. We shall grow wiser upon reflection, and gather, as we proceed, from the lips of tradition, some of those better histories which shall long survive the certified chronicles of the historian. Much of those that we have already at its hands, may resolve themselves into the finest notes of fancy. The very fortunes of their people—doomed, as they are, and desolate !—their fierce wars and faithless loves, —their unbending justice—their primitive love of truth—their firm endurance of toil and torment—their tenacity of purpose—their sleepless vigilance—wonderful self-esteem, and never-dying thirst of revenge! Nay, the very doubt and obscurity which envelope their history—the who, the whence and the whither of their race—their long legends of strife and invasion, seen only in the most imperfect glimmerings of assertion—these, not only yield scope, but furnish provocation to conjecture. The imagination, left free to spread its most daring wing, darts forward with the Phœnician adventurer on the countless ocean. Taking a bold flight from the pillars of Hercules, it never rests till it places a free foot on the highest peaks of Chimborazo and Darien ! With such a wing, and such a flight, what a bird's eye view of wonders shall we attain ! What a world of romance and song shall then lie open before us! We shall then trace the fortunes of those very people whose great cities lie buried among the mountain passes of Guatamelá. We shall pursue the story through the chambers at Palenque, and around the strange altar places, raised to false gods, in the desert regions of Copan !

We do not despair of these discoveries ; but they will be due, rather to the Homer than the Champollion of future times. We doubt not that, even now, we are on the eve of the most wonderful discoveries—treasures of story and of song which we may not live to enjoy, but which shall gather our children together, in sweet suspense and tearful expectation, around the family altar-place. No nation of our magnitude—sprung from such famous stocks—having such records of the past—having such hopes of the future—with our enthusiasm of character, and with our bold-

ness of design—can long remain without its *Genius loci!* It is in our hearts, that, even now, he breathes and burns!—for, what are all these strivings and aspirations, which, every where, in our day and country, are bringing together the select few—working in their academies, their societies, their libraries and their lyceums—to emulate the good and the great things of older nations. It is the struggle of that infant genius of place—the only genius which makes place holy, and preserves it from degradation and decay! That genius, thus feebly striving now, and with a faint torch burning in his infant grasp, is yet destined to grow mighty—yea, mightiest among the mighty. Already we behold his chosen altar-place on the blue summits of Apalachy!—already we gaze upon his marble watch-towers and golden heights. The flame, lighted from heaven, sheds its crimson splendours, far off, to the hills of New Hampshire, and glows, with the triumphant beauty of an unclouded sunset, over the purple waters of the gulf. We may see his worshippers, as they march in ceremonial procession from our kindred republics, bringing tribute and music, and incense to his shrine! Nor, last among these—nor least—we may count among the proudest of these shining hosts, our own dear brothers of the south—our offspring—the blessed sons and daughters of the muse;—stately in step, noble in aspect, and with eyes that flash like the lightning from our own summer heavens. They march, as to a conquest! Their banners waving—their music sounding—their high hearts beating—in holy sympathy with that white robed genius of our land, which alone shall confer upon it the richest trophies of renown—the renown which follows from the achievements of creative art. We have a faith in this vision! We cannot—we dare not—for your sakes—for the sake of our common mother—be unbelievers! We feel that we are men—sprung from the greatest men—and destined to execute all the trusts, and to secure all the triumphs, that God has ever permitted to the powers of humanity. This is a faith which will most surely realize its own predictions. We must enjoy these triumphs—these treasures must be ours. We should believe, though our eyes may never behold them! It is by a blessed instinct from heaven that we feel and *know* this prediction *must* be true! We know that we shall yet behold the advent of this

genius of place;—that, penetrating the antique forests, he shall drag the old tradition from his Druid cavern, and compel him to deliver up his secrets. We shall yet hear the incantation uttered by some mighty voice, not unworthy of the greatest masters who have spelled the departed in their urns. We shall see the cavern unsealed, its ponderous jaws distend, and, in a dim glory like that which hangs about the line of successive kings on the vision of Macbeth, we shall number the great spirits of the past, issuing forth and trooping in review before us! We shall see the Montezumas, the Quaghtimozins, and the Atabalipas of our own land, re-enacting their exploits—exploits not less marvellous than those which have already found their Homer! The hope which is based upon a noble ambition, is always sure to realize itself. The faith which is felt in sincerity, and which leads to work, is a faith which will assuredly bring down the god to its temples! Let this faith be ours and we shall be sure of the deity to whom we proffer the service of our hearts. We have but to build the altar, and he will send us the prophet and the priest. Let us only prepare the sacrifice with clean hands, and the fire which is to consume it, thenceforth to become our peculiar and eternal light, will, as surely as the rising and the setting of the sun, come down to us from heaven.

ARTICLE III.

LITERATURE AND ART AMONG THE AMERICAN ABORIGINES.

I.—Oneota, or the Red Race of America; Their History, Traditions, Customs, Poetry, Picture Writing, &c. By Henry R. Schoolcraft. New York: Burgess, Stringer & Co. 1845.

II.—Algic Researches. By Henry R. Schoolcraft. 2 vols. Harper & Brothers. New York.

The vitality of a people, their capacity to maintain themselves in recollection and to perpetuate a name through all the ordinary vicissitudes of empire, is in just proportion to their sensibilities; and these are shown in due degree with their susceptibility to the impressions of art. The highest manifestations of this susceptibility are those of invention—the faculty to combine and to compare, to adapt, endow, and, from the rude materials furnished by the experience of the nation, to extract its intellectual and moral resources, whether of pride or of pleasure, of triumph, or simple consolation. The humblest manifestation of this sensibility is that of music, since this is one of the most universal known to man, and may be entertained, even in large degree, by nations wholly barbarous in every other respect. There is, perhaps, no primitive people so very rude and wretched, as to be wholly without one or other of these manifestations. In all probability music is one of the first. If not exactly a substitute for thought—as one of the British poets would seem to affirm,—it is yet apt to precede the toils of thought, and, possibly, to pave the way for it. Appealing directly to the senses, it serves to chasten and refine them, and, by subduing or mollifying the passions, it leaves the intellectual nature free to assert itself, and to maintain, by other processes, the ascendancy which it thus acquires over the brutal. Other developments follow which are more or less modified according to the circumstances and condition of a country.

These declare themselves, first, in rude attempts at material art; in outlines upon the wall; in figures wrought in clay; in uncouth attempts to connect narrative with music;—the germs, not to be overestimated in the analysis of a national mind, of its romance and poetry. These are all bald or copious, fluent or constrained, wild or soft, according to the necessities, the habits, and the climate of a people. Where the nation, either directly, or through individuals whom it sends forth, have contact with strangers who are superior to themselves in art and civilization, the exercise of a rude faculty of imitation necessarily precedes all native and original endeavour. Where this is not the case, the art springs, slowly and painfully, from the usages of the tribes, from their sports, their toils, their religion, the egotism of the individual, or the pride of the stock,—to all of which it imparts, or seeks to impart, by little and little, the attributes of form, grace, colour and dignity. At first, no higher object is aimed at than simply to reconcile the struggling and impatient nature, yearning for better things, to a fate which seems unavoidable, and to a toil which needs assuasion. The shepherd is thus taught to find a solace, and perhaps a charm, in his rusting and wretched life among the bleak passes of the Alps; persuaded by his Melibœus of the superior loveliness of a condition,—with crook, and pipe, and dog—from which he feels it impossible to escape;—and the squalid fisherman who draws his nets, and pursues his miserable occupation, along the gloomy edges of the northern seas, may well yield himself to those assurances of song which can only reconcile him to his own land and labour by disparaging those of other nations as more wretched still. And thus it is that the poet becomes the first minister of a people, either to find a solace for the present, or to provoke prouder and more attractive hopes in another and more fruitful condition. Thus it is that we have the pastoral and piscatory Muse,—the Muse of a humble nature and inferior pursuits —to which it seeks to impart beauty and a grace which nothing but the growing fancy, under this tutelage, enables the miserable labourer to behold. In this manner are the rude nomadic tribes hurried forward under the stimulating entreaties of the lyrist,—himself a hunter and a warrior,—to the invasion of distant forests. Thus the young savage grapples with the grisly bear, and

confronts the she wolf in her den. War thus, is made to look lovely in spite of all its terrors; its dangers are wooed with the eager impetuosity of the bridegroom—its achievements form the objects of glory which a tribe most sedulously preserves for imitation—and the Bard justifies the crimes which are committed with this sanction—stimulates resentment, and impels the passions of the living to emulate, by similar atrocities, the terrible actions of the dead. The Greeks, sung by Homer, were neither more nor less than highwaymen and pirates;—the chiefs and demigods of the northern nations, honoured by Odin with highest places in Valhalla, were of the same kidney;—and both find their likeness in the hunter of the American forest—the dark, fierce, barbarian, Choctaw or Cherokee—whom we are apt to consider nothing more than the barbarian. But he too had his song, his romances and his deities—good and evil—even as the Hellenes and the Northmen; and his deeds were just as deserving as these, of their Saemund and Melesigenes. That they would have found their poet and historian to have given them as admirable a record as any of those which recount the deeds of Greek and Trojan, was a certainty to have followed hard upon their progress to that degree of civilization which would have brought with it the higher efforts of invention. The Greeks had no Homer till their wanderings were over; and, with the concentration of their affections and their endowments upon a fixed abode, the American aboriginals would have then looked back upon the past, gathering up, with equal curiosity and industry, its wild fragmentary traditions. These, in process of years, they would have embodied in a complete whole, and we should then have been as rigidly fettered by its details as we are now by those of Livy and Herodotus. First, we should have had the crude ballads, the border minstrelsy, of the several tribes, descriptive of their wild and bloody encounters for favourite hunting grounds, or for the revenge of a wrong done to the honour of a proud ambitious family. These would have been welded together by a better artist in a more refined period, and a still superior genius, seizing upon this labour as so much crude material, would have remodelled the action, improved upon the events, brought out the noble characters with more distinctness, adorned it with new fancies and episodes, and sent it forth

to admiring posterity, stamped with his own unchallenged impress. The rough story from which he drew, would, in the course of a century, have been as completely forgotten as were the still ruder ballads from which that was originally wrought; and nothing would have remained to future history but the symmetrical narrative, too beautiful for fact, which we cannot willingly believe, yet know not how to deny—a work too rich for history, yet too true to art, to be approached with anything short of delight and veneration.

That these materials were in the possession of the North American Indians,—that these results might have followed their amalgamation into one great family,—in a fixed abode—addressed to the pursuits of legitimate industry, and stayed from wandering either by their own internal progress, or by the coercion of a superior power—are conclusions not to be denied by those who have considered the character of this people. They had all the susceptibilities which might produce this history. Eager and intense in their feelings, lofty and courageous in spirit,—sensible in high degree to admiration,—ambitious of fame,—capable of great endurance, in the prosecution of an object, or in the eye of an adversary,—they were, at the same time, sensible to the domestic influences—were dutiful to the aged, heedful of the young,—rigid in their training and hopeful of their offspring,—with large faith in friendship,—large devotion to the gods,—not cold in their religion, and with an imagination which found spirits, divine and evil,—as numerous as those of the Greeks or Germans—in their groves, their mountains, their great oceans, their eternal forests, and in all the changes and aspects of their visible world. Their imaginations, which carried them thus far, to the creation of a vast pneumatology of their own, did not overlook the necessity of furnishing their spiritual agents with suitable attributes and endowments; and a closer inquiry than has yet been made into their mysteries, their faiths and fancies, will develope a scheme of singular imaginative contrivance, with wide spread ramifications, and distinguished by a boldness of conception, which will leave nothing wanting to him who shall hereafter contemplate a dream in mid-summer for his Chickasah or Choctaw Oberon. These traits and characteristics of mind and temperament, constitute the

literary susceptibilities of a people. These susceptibilities are the stuff out of which Genius weaves her best fabrics,—those which are most truthful, and most enduring, as most certainly native and original—to be wrought into symmetry and shape with the usual effects of time and civilization. Cultivation does not create, nor even endow the mind with its susceptibilities;—it simply draws them forth, into sight, and stimulates their growth and activity. Nor, on the other hand, does repose lose or forfeit the germinating property which lies dormant in the core. Like those flower seeds plucked from the coffin of the mummy of the Egyptian Pyramids, where they have lain sapless and seemingly lifeless for three thousand years,—they take root and flourish the moment that they feel the hand of the cultivator—springing into bud and beauty, as gloriously bright as the winged insect darting from his chrysalis cerements with the first glimpses of that warming sunlight which is kindred in its sympathy to the secret principle suspended in its breast. Time and change are necessary to these results. As the flower seed which had no light in the waxen grasp of Egyptian mortality, transferred to the sunny plains of Italy, or even nursed in the warm flower palaces of England, shoots out into instant vitality—so, the nature of the savage, sterile while traversing the wide prairies of Alabama, or ranging the desert slopes of Texas, subdued and fettered by the hand of civilization among the hills of Apalachy, becomes a Cadmus, and gives a written language to his hitherto unlettered people.* The most certain sources of a national literature, are to be found in the denseness of its population, in its readiness to encounter its own necessities—in other words, its willingness to labour in the domestic tendencies of the citizen—in the growth of intellectual wants—in the necessity of furnishing a stimulus to pampered and to palsied appetites, and in the sympathy of the community, thus needing provocatives, with the talent which is required to provide them. These conditions obtained,—with the sensibilities already insisted upon,—and the literature of a people is a growth too natural in its rise, too gradual in its progress, to be traced easily in its transitions. All

* The allusion here is to the invention of the Cherokee Alphabet by Gess, a half breed—an event quite as worthy of commemoration among his people, as the achievement of Cadmus was among the Greeks.

other conditions fulfilled, and its growth follows the requisitions of its people. In their summons, in their sympathy, the poet finds his birth and provocation. He scarcely asks their rewards. The eagerness of the Athenians after news—an eagerness which moves the patriotic indignation of the orator—was yet one of the prime sources of the popular intelligence,—by which the orator himself obtained his audience—which furnished strings to the grand organ of Æschylus, and filled the mouth of the Bee of Colonus with that honey which other bees can find there still. To this very appetite, this thirsting for the novel, they owed the beginnings of their drama, and all their other glorious arts. The exquisite finish of their first conceptions, was the duty of successive periods. As invention began to stale, taste ripened into fastidiousness. The massive outline, wholly beyond human ability to rival or surpass, was left in its acknowledged supremacy; and Genius, exhausted in the struggle for original conquest, settled down to the perfection of details. This is a history. These are all achievements of the city, of the crowded mart, of struggling, toiling, conflicting masses. It is the progress of those masses, writing itself in stone, in tower, in temple, in all sorts of monuments. These are the signs of permanence, of a fixed condition, drawing resolutely from itself and from the narrow empire to which its domain is circumscribed. We can hope for nothing of this sort from a wandering people. They build no monuments, rear no temples, leave no proofs behind them that they ever had a faith, or an affection, a hero or a God! The hunter, and even the agricultural life, is necessarily thus sterile. Their capacities,—such as depend on the studious cultivation of their sensibilities,—are deadened and apathetic by disuse. But that we reason from first principles and just parallels, we have no right to know that they ever had sensibilities,—that they are not obtuse and incapable by nature,—an inferior order of creation having different uses, and a far inferior destiny. But we know better, and justly ascribe to pursuit and condition that which the unobserving judgment would refer to native incapacity. That sort of mental flexibility and aptitude, which, in a state of crowded society, is the necessary result of attrition with rival minds, conflicting temperaments, and continually arising necessities, yields, in their cases, to a cold

shyness of character, a stern and jealous self-esteem, a hard and resolute reserve and haughty suspiciousness of mood, which leaves the individual wholly deficient in all the arts of conciliation. Confident in himself, his own strength and individuality, he lacks that love of approbation, that concern for the opinions of others, which is at the bottom of much of the ambition by which poet and painter are drawn to their tasks. He asks for no sympathy, does not expect it, perhaps scarcely cares for it in any degree. Is he not himself?—Equal to his own wants, fearless of foes, wholly indifferent of friends? It matters not much what you think of him, so that you do not question him. If he has a merit, a faculty, it is enough, for his own gratification, that he is conscious of its possession. He does not feel or find it necessary that you should quaff at his fountains. His light, if it burns at all, is carefully hidden beneath his own bushel. He has virtues, but they are not those which belong to, or spring from society. He is proud, and this protects him from meanness; generous, and capable of the most magnanimous actions; hospitable,—you shall share his bread and salt to his own privation;—loves liberty with a passion that absorbs almost all others—and brave—rushing into battle with the phrenzy of one who loves it—he prolongs the conflict, unhappily, long after mercy entreats to spare.

Such is the North American Indian. He probably bore an equivalent relation to the original possessors of this continent, with the barbarians of the Northern Hive to Italy, in the days of her luxurious decline. At the time of the discovery of America, he was very much the sort of savage that the historians represent the Gaul, the Goth, and Cimbrian to have been during the wars of Camillus and of Catulus, of the Scipios and of Caius Marius. The Teutones—the great German family, with all its tribes—were all of this complexion;—neither braver, nor wiser, nor better, nor more skilful in the arts, nor possessed of a jot more of imagination and letters, at the moment when they first became known to civilization. The Saxon Boor when first scourged by the Norman into manhood and stature, moral and physical, had given scarcely more proofs of intellectual endowment than the red men of the great Apalachian chain. He was a christian, it is true, after a fashion; but christianity is properly the religion of

civilization, and he was not a civilized being—far less so, as we know, in the time of Rollo, than was the Mexican during the reign of Montezuma. Of all these nations, North and South, the North American Indian—keeping in mind the parallels of time already indicated—was probably the superior person. He was quite as valiant, quite as venturous—had probably overthrown the more civilized nations of Central and of South America, and, as dim glimpses seem to assure us, had been the conqueror of a highly civilized and even white people in North America. He was fleet of foot, strong of frame, capable of great enterprises; of great powers of endurance; equally erect, large, and symmetrical—a model, according to West, for the conception of a god;*—and not without some few of the arts of civilization, whether acquired by conquest, or by his own unassisted genius. His bow and arrows, his war club, his canoes, his own garments and decorations, were wrought, not only with considerable dexterity and ingenuity, but with an eye to the beautiful and picturesque. He had a picture-writing like the Mexicans, and was not without very decided beginnings of a literature. This may have been rude enough,—not so rude, however, as we are accustomed to think it—but it is sufficient that he had made a beginning. His genius answered for the rest. This differed considerably in the several families. Among these, the Catawbas and the Natchez, seem to have been most distinguished for an elasticity and grace of manner, which separated them widely from the sullen and ferocious Muscoghee. The Cherokees, however, had taken the most certain steps towards civilization. Their structures were more permanent, their towns more populous, and a large portion of their people had engrafted the farmer upon the hunter life. The laws of nature are so mutually provocative, that one step cannot well be taken without another. The moment that the habitation and limits of the barbarian become circumscribed, he begins to labour. This is of necessity. The extension of the abodes of man,

* The reader need not be reminded of the famous anecdote of the American painter West, who, on seeing the statue of the Apollo Belvidere, exclaimed, "My God! how like a young Mohawk warrior!" The coincidence was not in the mere symmetry of frame. It was the eye, the breathing attitude—the mind and music in the air, action and expression.

and the increase of his numbers, is fatal to the wild beast of the forest,—to the forest itself—and it becomes really easier to find food from labour, in the earth, than to wander remotely, into distant regions, to the probable encounter with superior enemies, furious at any intrusion upon their hunting grounds. This, in fact, was the secret cause of the moral improvement of the Cherokees. The Creeks boasted to have made women of them. They had whipt them into close limits, where they were compelled to labour,—and labour,—a blessing born of a penalty,—is the fruitful mother of all the nobler exercises of humanity. Hence, the progress of the Cherokees—their farms, their cattle, their manufactures, their discovery of the alphabet, their schools, their constitution, and newspaper,—all the fruit of their subjection, by the Muscoghees and other nations, just before the first English settlements in Virginia and the Carolinas. Had these English settlements been such as a mighty nation should have sent forth—had the colonies been such as issued from the fruitful ports of Carthage,—thirty thousand at a time, as were sent out by Hanno,—what would have been the effect upon the destinies of the red men of America. They would have been rescued from themselves and preserved,—a mighty nation, full of fire, of talent, of all the materials which ensure long life to the genius and to the eminence of a race. The good people of England were not the morbid philanthropists that they have become in latter days—latter day saints, putting to the blush such poor pretenders as those who read the golden plates of Mormon, and look out for the fiery advents which disturb the dreams of Parson Miller. They would have subdued the aborigines, as William of Normandy subdued the Saxons. An European colony of ten thousand men would have done this. They would not have paltered with the ignorant savages, flattering their vanity in order to conciliate their prejudices and disarm their anger, as was done by the feeble settlers at James Town, and other places. They would have overrun them, parcelled them off in tens, and twenties, and hundreds, under strict task masters, and, by compelling the performance of their natural duties—that labour which is the condition of all human life,—would have preserved them to themselves and to humanity. Properly diluted, there was no better blood than that of Cherokee and Natchez. It

would have been a good infusion into the paler fountain of Quaker and Puritan—the very infusion which would put our national vanity in subjection to our pride, and contribute to keep us as thoroughly independent of the mother country, in intellectual, as we fondly believe ourselves to be in political respects. But we are becoming too discursive.

Our imperfect knowledge of the Indian,—the terror that he inspired,—the constant warfare between his race and our own—have embittered our prejudices, and made us unwilling to see any thing redeeming either in his character or intellect. We are apt to think him no more than a surly savage, capable of showing nothing better than his teeth. The very mention of his name, recalls no more grateful images than scalping knife and tomahawk; and, shuddering at the revolting associations, we shut our eyes, and close our ears, against all the proofs which declare his better characteristics. We are unwilling to read his past as we are unable to control his future;—refuse to recognize his sensibilities, and reject with scorn the evidence of any more genial attributes, in his possession, which might persuade us to hope for him in after days—for his natural genius and his real virtues—when, shut in by the comparatively narrow empire which we have allotted him—barred from expansion by the nations which are destined to crowd upon him on every hand,—the people of Texas, of Oregon and Mississippi,—he will be forced to throw aside the license of the hunter, and place himself, by a happy necessity, within the traces of civilization.

Regarded without prejudice, and through the medium even of what we most positively know of his virtues and his talents, and the North American Indian was as noble a specimen of crude humanity as we can find, from history, any aboriginal people to have been. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that he laboured under any intellectual deficiency. On the contrary, the proofs are conclusive, that, compared with other nations—the early Romans before their amalgamation with the great Tuscan family; the Jews prior to the Egyptian captivity;—the German race to the time of Odoacer,—the Saxon, to the period of the Heptarchy, and the Norman tribes in the reign of Charlemagne;—he presented as high and sufficient proofs of susceptibility for improve-

ment and education, as any, the very noblest stocks in our catalogue. In some respects, indeed, the Indians show more impressively. The republican features in their society—their leagues for common defence and necessity, and the frequency of their counsels for the adjustment of subjects in common—led to the growth of a race of politicians and orators, of whose acuteness, excellent skill in argument, and great powers of elocution, the early discoverers give us some of the most astonishing examples. The samples of their eloquence which have come down to us, are as purely Attic as the most severe critic could desire—bold, earnest, truthful—clear in style, closely thought, keenly argued, conclusive in logic, and, in the highest degree, impressive in utterance. That their action was admirable, and would have delighted Demosthenes, we know from authorities upon which we would as cheerfully rely as upon the assurances of the great Athenian orator himself. Now capacious and flowing, now terse and epigrammatic, adapting the manner to the matter, and both to the occasion,—sometimes smooth and conciliatory, anon searching and sarcastic—now persuasive and adroit, and again suddenly startling because of their vehement force and audacious imagery ;—these were the acknowledged characteristics of their eloquence, which awed the most fearless spectator and would have done honour to the noblest senate. An eloquent people is capable of taking any place in letters—in mastering all forms of speech, in perfecting any species of composition—history, or poetry—the one faculty, indeed, somewhat implying all the rest, since to be a great orator, imagination must keep pace with thought,—and reason, and the capacity for historical narration, must contribute to the embodiment of the argument, to which a warm fancy must impart colour and animation, and which great energies of character must endow with force. All of these qualities and constituents were in possession of our aborigines. They had all the requisites, shown by their speeches only, even if there were no other proofs, for intellectual development in every species of literature. Tecumseh was a very great orator,—so was his brother, the prophet. The Cherokee, Attakullakullah, was one of the most persuasive and insinuating of speakers ; and the renown of Logan, of the Shawanee, is already a proverb from the single

speech preserved by Jefferson. Some of the sayings and orations of the Seminoles and Creeks, are equally remarkable for their significance and poetical beauty. Of the Six Nations we have numerous fragments, and the Catawbas had a reputation of this sort, among the tribes of the South, though but few specimens are preserved to us. Wetherford, who roused the Southern Indians to war, while Tecumseh and his brother were fomenting the western nations, was not inferior to either of these as a statesman and an orator. His speech to Jackson, when he surrendered himself, voluntarily, a willing sacrifice, in order that his country should obtain peace, is at once one of the most touching and manly instances of eloquence on record; and, in recent times, Osceola of the Seminoles, and Mooshalatubbee of the Choctaws —the one a bold, and the other an adroit speaker,—are proofs in point, showing that the faculty was not one to die utterly out in the emasculation of their several people. We should be pleased, did our space suffice, to give examples from each of these remarkable men. Enough to say, that they betrayed the possession of a power of logical thinking, lively fancy, subdued good taste, cool judgment, and lofty imagination, such as, addressed to literature, in a community even partially civilized, would have been worthy of all fame and honour in succeeding times. And that we should doubt or be insensible to this conclusion, is only to be accounted for by reference to our blinding prejudices against the race—prejudices which seem to have been fostered as necessary to justify the reckless and unsparing hand with which we have smitten them in their habitations, and expelled them from their country. We must prove them unreasoning beings, to sustain our pretensions as human ones—show them to have been irreclaimable, to maintain our own claims to the regards and respect of civilization.

We commend to some of our clever compilers,—Mr. Griswold, for example—the plan of an Indian miscellany, in which choice specimens of their oratory, their fable, their poetry,—shall appear together, in judicious opposition. The material for a goodly volume is abundant. Colden, Heckewelder, Adair, Jefferson, Hewatt, Lawson, Duponceau, and many others, may be examined with this object; and, among recent writers, there is Mr. School-

craft,—a host in himself—whose passion for the subject will make him a willing contributor to any plan for doing it justice. Such a miscellany will prove the native North American to have been an artist, a poet, a painter, and a novelist. His abilities were not confined to oratory alone. His faculties were exercised in other kinds of composition. He was no barren churl—no sullen, unproductive savage—such as we are too willing to suppose him. He had the necessary sensibilities for literature, and was not wholly without the performance. His affections were deep and lively, and stimulated his genius to other utterances than those of the Council House. These sensibilities, though perhaps less nice and active than they would have been were he less the hunter—less fierce and intractable in war—were not utterly subdued by his more prevailing passions. His superstitions alone are in proof of his spiritual susceptibility. It has been commonly insisted that these were of a cold and brutal character, at best resembling those of the Northmen—a savage mythology, filled with gods like Odin and Thor,—bloody, dark, malignant, and gratified only by the most horrid rites and festivities. This is only true in part. They had gods of terror it is true, as the Etrurians had—but like these people and the Greeks, they had others of gentle and benignant influence, smiling, graceful, fantastic, who watched over the happier hours of the race, promoted their kindlier fortunes, and gave countenance to the better feelings and habits of the individual. Their pantheon was quite as well supplied as the Greek, though they had not lived long enough to have it arranged, and made immortal, by their dramatists and poets. They had their ruling, their unknown god—their good and evil genii—their demons of the elements—of earth and air, of fire and water, of hill and valley, and lake and wood; and the lively genius of the people, in moments of danger or delight, created new deities for the occasion, consecrating the hour and the place to that worship which had been ordained by their passing necessities or moods. For all of these they had names and veneration. Offices were assigned them, adapted, each, to their several attributes and station, the analysis of which constantly reminds you of those so common among the Germans, by means of which their modern writers have framed so many fanciful and delightful histories.

The Kobolds, and Ondines, and Salamanders, might find their parallels among the personifications of the Indian—and their spirits of the mine and the river, of the forest and the mountain, bearing Indian epithets quite as musical as any in the language of the Teuton, attest all the preliminary conditions of an intellect that needed but little help from civilization to grow into a vast and noble literature. His gods were hostile or benignant, cold or affectionate, hateful to the sight and mind, or lovely to the imagination and the eye. He addressed them accordingly. To some he urged solicitations, and implored in song. Others he deprecated, and addressed in prayer and expostulation. He had his burnt offerings also, and no idea could have been more happy, than that of fumigating his deity with the smoke of that precious weed, whose aroma, so pleasant to himself, was to be extorted only by his own lips. The operation was thus never wholly in vain, whether the god accepted the sacrifice or not. The spirit of the cape and headland, of the battle and hunting ground, of peace, and war, and fortune; of love, and of hate;—commanded thus his homage, and received his devotions. Extraordinary events or achievements; a spot rendered peculiar by circumstance, or by its own aspect; the wild beast that baffled his skill, or the bird that appeared to him on frequent occasions, when he was troubled, or very joyful;—these were all fixed in recollection by some spiritual name and emblem. His omens were not a whit less picturesque, or imposing, less reasonable, or less impressive, than those of the Greeks and Romans. The vulture spoke to him in a language of command, as it did to the wolf-suckled children of Rhea Sylvia. His prophets were quite as successful as the augur, Attius Navius, and practised, with equal success, the art of bringing the gods to a participation in the affairs of State. The favourable response cheered, and the unfriendly paralyzed his valour;—and, altogether, with faith and veneration, the character of the North American Indian exhibited, not merely in common but in large degree, all of those moral and human sensibilities, out of which art has usually fashioned her noblest fabrics. The capacities and the sensibilities were there, present, in mind and heart, waiting but the hour and the influence which come at length to every nation, thus endowed, which

is permitted to survive long enough in independent career. Their growth and just development, must have followed the first steps of civilization. We have noted their oratory, and their spiritual exercises; but their songs might teach us something farther. What was the song of war, of victory, and the death song, but strains, each, like those of the Jews and the Northmen, on similar occasions, under similar exigencies, combining history with invocation. The exploits of their warriors, thus chaunted in the hearing of the tribe, and transmitted through successive generations, would, if caught up, and put in the fashion of a living language, be not unanalogous to those rude ballads, out of which Homer framed his great poem, and the German his Nibelungen Lied. They embodied the history of the race, with its groups of gallant warriors, and one great commanding figure in the foreground. If the chief filled the centre, emulous and admiring subordinates grew around him, and the correspondence of all furnished a complete history. How such a history, chaunted by a famous chief on his bed of death and glory, could be made to ring, trumpet like, in a modern ear, by such a lyre as Walter Scott. We should not need a Milton, or a Homer, for the performance. The material would have suited Scott's poetical genius better, perhaps, than that of better bards. And how rich must be that material! How wild were the conflicts of our Indians—how numerous—with what variety of foes, under what changing circumstances, and how individual always! What is there improbable in the notion that Powhatan, in his youth, was at the sacking and the conquest of some of the superior nations in the Southwest —the Biloxi for example,—of whom the tradition goes that they were a rich and populous people, accomplished in the arts, who were overrun by an influx of strange barbarians and driven into the sea. His ancestors may have brought their legions to the conquest of Palenque—may have led the assault upon the gloomy towers of Chi Chen—may have been the first to cross the threshhold of those gloomy and terrible superstitions, whose altars have so strangely survived their virtues. It is a somewhat curious fact, in connection with this suggestion, that Opechancanough—a famous warrior—a man of very superior parts who usurped the sway of the Virginia Indians after the death of Powhatan, and

probably disputed it while he lived—was described by them as having been the "Prince of a foreign nation,"—and as having "come to them a great way from the southwest." Beverly adds, —"And by their accounts, we suppose him to have come from the *Spanish Indians, somewhere near Mexico*, or the mines of St. Barbe:—but be that matter how it will, from that time (his usurpation) till his captivity, there never was the least truce between them and the English."* We reserve to another paper our notice of the miscellany, by which the preceding remarks have been occasioned. Mr. Schoolcraft is an authority, in Indian history, upon which we are permitted to rely. He has passed more than thirty years of his life, chiefly in an official capacity, among the red men of the continent. He married an Indian woman of great intelligence and beauty, and was thus placed in a position to see her people, if we may so phrase it, without disguise. He was admitted to their privacy, and informed in their traditions and character. He has accordingly written, at frequent periods upon these subjects, and, we may add, exhibits no larger predilection in their behalf, than the proofs which he produces can fairly justify. A few years ago, he put forth two interesting volumes of Indian traditions, under the title of "Algic Researches." We doubt if the publication attracted much attention, though quite worthy to do so in the eyes of the student. The title probably discouraged the ordinary reader. Of the work before us, we are in possession of the first number only, though a second has recently been published. A detailed notice of these shall be given in future pages, when it will be seen that nothing has been urged in our text, whether for the capacities of the red men, or their actual performance, for which there is not good warranty in the records.

* Itopatin, the brother of Powhatan, succeeded to his empire, but was dispossessed by Opechancanough, who was remarkable for his talents, his address, his large stature, noble presence, and the terrors of his name. Here now is material for fiction. Why should not Opechancanough have been a prince in Mexico, flying from the Spaniards? Why should he not have been a captive to the sire of Powhatan, while he and the latter were yet children? How easy to form a romance upon this conjecture! How easy to convert his ceaseless struggle against the English invader into another story. Then, there is the overthrow of Itopatin—but——

ARTICLE IV.

DANIEL BOON;

THE FIRST HUNTER OF KENTUCKY.

"Of all men, saving Sylla the man slayer,
Who passes for in life and death most lucky,
Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The General Boon, backwoodsman of Kentucky,
Was happiest among mortals any where;
For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoyed the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze."

DON JUAN

THESE verses are not to be counted among the very happiest of Lord Byron's muse, and he has, in one small particular at least, sacrificed the truth to the rhyme—a matter in which poets are supposed, though incorrectly, to be somewhat privileged. It is for us to correct these errors. Our Boon was never more than a Colonel. We are, as a people, so liberal in conferring this distinction, that it has ceased almost to be one; and this is one reason why we are rather slow in getting beyond it. Whether Boon was even a Colonel, except by the courtesy, is another question which it is scarcely possible at this late day to answer. It was as a Captain, that he received Governor Dunmore's commission in ante-revolutionary times, during the war with the Shawanee Indians; and, in his frequent conflicts with the Indians, he rather led in the sudden emergency, at the head of his neighbours, aroused by savage incursion, than because of any military commission or special legal authority. In such cases, distinguished by promptness of character, coolness and ready courage, and frequently summoned to the field, a leader receives his title, as

such, by the spontaneous impulse of those whom he conducts. He is their Captain, their Colonel or their General, as the case may be; and such, in all probability, was the origin of Boon's military title—deserved, certainly, much more than that of thousands more formally bestowed; for our backwoodsman did famous good service without beat of drum, and probably was one of the most modest leaders of men that the world has ever seen. That he ever won the style of General, even by the courtesy, is, however, very doubtful.

Lord Byron has committed another error of much more importance. Boon's rifle occasionally made free with much nobler victims than bear and buck. He was a hunter of men too, upon occasion. Not that he was fond of this sport. His nature was a gentle one—really and strangely gentle—and did not incline to war. But he had no shrinkings, no false tendernesses, no scruples of feeling or of conscience in the moment of necessity. He was a man, albeit one in whose bosom the milk of human kindness still flowed copiously and warm. He could be a warrior, ay, and take his rank among warriors, where the stakes of the game were death. He smote the savage man, as well as the scarcely more savage beast of the same region; and, though the fact is not expressly written, yet there is no reason to suppose that he forbore to do battle after the Indian fashion. He could take a scalp with the rest, and might feel justified in the adoption of a practice which, when employed by the whites, had its very great influence in discouraging the Indian appetite for war. With these exceptions our epigraph may stand, and we make two-fold allowance in the case of a poet and an Englishman, in all matters that concern history and America. They both claim privileges in these respects, with which, at this moment, we are in no mood to quarrel. Boon was all the rest that Byron writes him—lucky that he lived to a good old age—that his heart was not rendered callous by strifes or years, but was true to the last hour to the holiest humanities—that his desires were few, his appetites modest, his ambition humble, and his manhood prolonged to the latest moment of his existence. His fortunes were thus far good, though he died penniless.

Boon was one of those remarkable men whom Providence

seems to have endowed with a special restlessness of character, in order to the performance of certain tasks necessary for the human race, but from which the greater proportion of mankind shrink in dismay. He was born to be a pioneer. It is useless to talk about training here. A man like Boon is as much the creature of a special destiny as the poet or the painter. He has his office appointed him—and the mere influences of the community in which he is reared, though these may contribute to his passion, cannot at any time subdue it. In an age of chivalry—during the Crusades—Boon would have been a knight errant, equally fearless and gentle. That he would have been much of a Squire of Dames, is very uncertain—but he loved his wife, and he risked his scalp more than once to rescue beauty from the clutches of the savage. His native mood prompted his adventure. He had an eye for the picturesque in nature, as is the marked characteristic in all very great hunters—a characteristic of which Mr. Cooper has given us an exquisite ideal in Leather Stocking. His mind was of a contemplative character, and loved to muse undisturbed by contact with man, upon its own movements, as influenced by the surrounding atmosphere. A constant desire for change of scene and object, is the natural growth of a passion for the picturesque, and an impatience of the staid and formal monotonies of ordinary life, springs with equal certainty from an eager temperament, great elasticity of muscle, great powers of endurance, and an eye that seems to discern and detect, rather by an instinct of its own, than by the ordinary exercise of vision, objects in forest or prairie much too obscure for the common sighted mortal. These were among the moral and physical characteristics of our hunter. Add to these, that he was a dead shot, an active man with the tomahawk, tall, erect, of powerful frame and exquisite symmetry, and you have one of the most perfect specimens of the class to which our adventurer belongs.

Daniel Boon was a Virginian, born somewhere about the year 1737.* Of his early life nothing is known. He emigrated to

* Marshall, in his History of Kentucky, represents him as born in Maryland, somewhere about the year 1746, and emigrating, without his parents, to Virginia while yet in the gristle of his youth. With regard to his birth-place, we have followed the more popular account. The period of his birth, as set down

North Carolina in his youth, and here we find him, in 1769, a married man, with children, on the banks of the Yadkin. It is at this period that his own narrative begins. This production is a small octavo pamphlet of thirty or forty pages, and embodies his adventures from the period of his arrival in Kentucky to the close of the year 1782. It is probably not the production of his own pen, since it bears marks of ambitious composition quite unlike our hunter—sometimes it aims at eloquence and poetry, and at all times it lacks that simplicity of manner which belonged to the character of Boon. In all likelihood he furnished the material to some young lawyer or editor, who dressed it up with rhetoric and made it fine for company. With all these (supposed) advantages it is an exceedingly unsatisfactory performance. Its details are wholly in its flourishes, and never in its facts, and this is perhaps a sufficient reason why we should deny the paternity of it to Boon himself. The events are meagre and few—a skeleton only of a biography, which, properly filled out, would no doubt have been as ravishing as any romance. But we must make the most of it, such as it is.

"It was on the first of May, 1769," that our hunter "resigned his domestic happiness for a time, to wander through the wilderness of America, in quest of the country of Kentucky." He assigns no motive for the pursuit. He urges no reason for this "resignation of domestic happiness." He simply acknowledges an impulse and he must obey it. His companions were five in number—John Finley, John Stewart, Joseph Holden, James Monay and William Cool. Finley, of whom unfortunately nothing more is known, had visited the country two years before. He was now something of a pilot. The party was on foot. They burdened themselves neither with clothes nor provisions, with no unnecessary equipage, whether for day or night. The curtains

in the text, is estimated from the supposed period to which he had reached at the time of his death. He was then said to be eighty-five, and he died in 1822. His oldest son was killed by the Indians, fighting bravely, on his second visit to Kentucky, in 1773. Supposing this son to have been sixteen, and Boon to have been a father at twenty—both reasonable estimates—and we arrive at a very probable result. If he were born in 1746, he could scarcely have had a son old enough for Indian warfare in 1773.

of heaven and the trees of the wood were their canopy, and they slept among the long grasses of the slopes, or amongst the dried leaves of the forest, without fear. Their food was taken by the way-side. Their stealthy feet came upon the deer as he couched in the stunted thicket, and the wild turkey was easily shot from the branches of the high tree under which they had slept throughout the night. In this manner they went forward in a westwardly direction, until they crossed the wilderness bordering on the Cumberland mountains. At last, standing upon a gentle but commanding eminence, on the seventh day of June, they looked down with delight upon the lovely levels of the Kentucky. Here they paused and proceeded to encamp. The weather was growing unfavourable, and they built themselves a rude but sufficient shelter. Their temporary settlement prepared, they sallied forth to reconnoitre the country and seek their game. The forest had never before echoed to the footsteps of the white man. Wild beasts of all sorts were in abundance, the deer, the bear, and mighty herds of the buffalo, cropping the herbage of the plains or browsing upon the cane tops in the morass. From June to December, did our hunters prosecute their sports with great satisfaction, and in perfect safety. But a change was at hand. On the twenty-second of the latter month, Boon and John Stewart went forth together. The scene had never been more grateful to the eyes of our adventurer. The day was a pleasant one, and their rambles brought them to a close of it, through a region of incomparable beauty, upon the banks of the Kentucky river. Here, at sunset, as they ascended the brow of a hill, they were descried by a party of Indians concealed in a neighbouring canebrake. These rushed suddenly out upon them. Their surprise was complete, and the next moment found them prisoners. But Boon and his companion betrayed no uneasiness. The manly philosophy which teaches to wait patiently and to endure without complaint, was that which constituted the chief strength of our hunters, as it is that of every heroic nature. They submitted without a murmur to captivity, and were kept for seven days in the usual Indian sort of confinement. The cheerfulness which they manifested, their fortitude and gentleness, disarmed something of the watchfulness of their captors. They relaxed in their

vigilance, and Boon was soon enabled to take advantage of the change. In the dead of night, as the party lay in a thick cane-brake by a rousing fire, our hunter touched his companion quietly and thus awoke him. The Indians were in a deep sleep. A whisper sufficed for a proper understanding between the captives. They rose to their feet and departed, leaving the savages to take their rest. And here we see a proof of the gentle nature of our hunter. Many of the fierce spirits of our forest land, soured by captivity, and reared with a constant hate and apprehension of the Indians, would have been as eager for revenge as for escape, and, once in possession of their freedom, with their foes sleeping around them, would never have been satisfied to leave them in possession of their scalps. They would have deepened, with their hatchets, those slumbers which the more human nature of Boon forbore to disturb.

Our hunters returned to their camp, but found it abandoned. Their companions were dispersed and on the way for home. While they hesitated, to the surprise of Boon, his brother, Squire Boon, accompanied by a stranger, made his appearance in the camp. The party now consisted of four, but was soon to be thinned. The stranger who came with Squire Boon, soon left them and returned to North Carolina, and John Stewart was shortly after killed by the Indians. The little party of three suffered surprise. The first intimation which they had of the proximity of the foe, was by the fire from a cane-brake. Stewart fell mortally wounded. The two Boons remained unhurt, but the Indians showing themselves numerously, with a shout, they were forced to precipitate flight, compelled from a distance to behold the savage as he stripped the fresh scalp from the bleeding skull of their comrade. They were only too well satisfied at being able to save their own. Stewart was the first anglo-norman victim of the red man, in the lovely wilds of Kentucky. Hitherto, it had been their practice to make prisoners of their foes, rather than to despatch them. They preferred bondsmen, and the triumph, such as always awaited them, when they brought home captives to the wigwam. But they had grown embittered by intrusion. The party assailing them may have lost in recent combat one of their warriors, whose *manes* it was necessary to

appease by a victim ; or they may have recognized their former captives in Stewart and his companion. Enough, however, that the tradition asserts the blood of John Stewart to be that of the first white man ever shed upon a soil which was destined, for long years after, to be annually watered from the same generous fountains.

The two Boons succeeded in making their escape. Their disasters did not discourage them. They fled, but did not leave the wilderness. A howling wilderness it was, but, not without its attractions for the peculiar nature with which they were endowed. If we can believe our hunter, they were still quite happy. "You see," said Boon to the Squire—"You see how little human nature requires. It is in our own hearts, rather than in the things around us, that we are to seek felicity. A man may be happy in any state. It only asks a perfect resignation to the will of Providence."

It does not appear that Squire Boon disputed this philosophy, which was no doubt felt by his brother. But they spent no time in the discussion. They built themselves a cottage against the winter, and devoted themselves wholly, day by day, to the one, but various toil, of hunting. They remained without disturbance through the winter. On the first of May, 1770, Boon sent his brother home for supplies and recruits, leaving him, as his narrative mournfully expresses it, "by himself, without bread, salt or sugar, without company of his fellow creatures, or even a horse or a dog." A few days of this lonesomeness were passed uncomfortably enough, exercising all the courage and philosophy of our hero. Thinking of his wife made him melancholy ; for, as Childe Harold has it—

> "Thinking on an absent wife
> Will blanch a faithful cheek."

A thousand vague apprehensions filled the brain of our hunter, but he was not the man to indulge them long. Besides, he had really too many pleasures where he was. His life was one of excitements, and a certain sense of insecurity heightened his enjoyment. He lived in sight of loveliness, but on the verge of danger. Beauty came to him, with Terror looking over her shoulder. The wilderness was charming to the senses and the mind, but its thick-

ets of green concealed the painted and ferocious savage; and he who hunted the deer successfully through his haunts, might still, while keenly bent upon the chase, be unconscious of the stealthy footsteps which were set down in his own tracks. With the dawn of day he arose from his couch of leaves or rushes, and started upon the chase. New groves, and woods, and hills, and plains salute his vision with each returning dawn. He pursues no old paths, but, reconnoitering the country, gathers a new horizon with every sunrise. Boon describes these wanderings as perfectly delicious. The swelling of the breeze, the repose of the leaf, the mysterious quiet of the woods, the chaunt of the birds, or the long melancholy howl of the wolf at evening—these are among the objects, the sights and sounds, which stir his sensibilities and move him to the happiest meditations. He tells of the delight which he feels as he ascends the great ridges, and looks over the fertile vallies, and the ample wastes before him. How he follows the Ohio—*la Belle Riviere* of the French—in all its silent wanderings—how he sits and studies the huge mountains as they cap their venerable brows with clouds. That he should find a pleasure in such contemplations, declares for his superior moral nature. He was not merely a hunter. He was on a mission. The spiritual sense was strong in him. He felt the union between his inner and the nature of the visible world, and yearned for their intimate communion. His thoughts and feelings were those of a great discoverer. He could realize the feelings of a Columbus or a Balboa, and thus, gazing over the ocean waste of forest which then spread from the dim western outlines of the Alleghanies, to the distant and untravelled waters of the Mississippi, he was quite as much isolated as was ever any of the great admirals who set forth, on the Atlantic, still dreaming of Cathay. His fire at noon is kindled near some sweet water, and his meal is made from the loin of the buck which his rifle has just stricken in the forest. And his fast broken, he goes on his way rejoicing, ignorant of fatigue while the day lasts, still pressing forward, so long as the scene is lovely, and the wild deer darts across his path. With the approach of night he retires to the cane-break rather than to his camp. He sleeps there infrequently. He has reason to believe that it is visited in his absence, and a new resting place receives him every night.

How this very insecurity sweetens his adventures! He sleeps not the less soundly under these circumstances. He does not fear, for, in his own words—"How unhappy such a situation for a man tormented with fear, which is vain if no danger comes, and if it does only augments the pain." It is his boast to be free from this humiliating passion—he speaks of being "*diverted*" by the wolves howling about his den by night; and it was at their own peril they crossed his path by day. "I had plenty," he says, "in the midst of want; was happy, though surrounded by dangers; how should I be melancholy? No populous city, with all its structures and all its commerce, could afford me so much pleasure as I found here."

And thus, lonely but not unhappy, he remained until July, when his brother returned to him at his old camp. Here it was now thought imprudent to linger longer. The Indians were probably awakened to his proximity. They set out accordingly for Cumberland river, bestowing names, like other founders of nations, upon heights, and plains, and waters. No event occurs of interest in the life of our hunter, until, in the latter part of 1771, we find him once more at home, from which he had been absent more than two years. He finds his family in happy circumstances, but is not satisfied to leave them so. The destiny must be obeyed. That restless impulse to change will admit of no excuse, and he sells his farm on the Yadkin, and all his unnecessary baggage, and, with five families more, leaves home in September, 1773, for a final remove to the lovely forest land which has delighted him so much. Before the party had left the settled regions, it was joined by another, consisting of forty men. The solitude of Kentucky was about to be broken. The seal had been taken from the fountain. But the numbers which increased the strength of the Colonists diminished their security, and left them fewer chances of concealment and escape. A melancholy finish was about to befall this journey. On the tenth of October, they were surprised by the Indians. The rear of the party—probably less vigilant than the advance—was attacked, and six of the whites were slain. The Indians were repulsed, yet the cattle was dispersed, and the company so dispirited that they retreated forty miles to a settlement on Clinch river.

But Boon ceased to be alone in this march of discovery into the Kentucky wilderness. There were other spirits like himself, destined to open the way for the thronging multitudes that began to cry aloud for homes of their own. In 1770, an expedition consisting of forty stout hunters, set out from the western settlements of Virginia, for the purpose of trapping and shooting upon the other side of the Cumberland mountain. Of these, thirty may have fallen by the hands of the Indians. We lose sight of them altogether. Nine of them reached Kentucky under the command of Col. James Knox. They were so long gone from home, that they acquired the proverbial name of "*the Long Hunters.*" Thus it was that Boon was not the sole white occupant of Kentucky as he imagined. The two parties never met. They might well pass each other a thousand times in those pathless wilds, as ships scattered over the broad waste of ocean, yet never come in sight of their mutual fires. From this period, every successive season sent forth its new explorers and many of them men of remarkable courage and capacity; but our consideration must now be yielded entirely to one. Boon continued with his family at Clinch river until 1774, when he accepted an appointment of Governor Dunmore, of Virginia, to conduct a brigade of surveyors from the falls of the Ohio into the new settlement. His reputation was evidently spreading. Without the slightest ambition for notoriety, flying, as it were, from his kindred and society, he was rapidly and in spite of himself acquiring fame among them. He executed his mission with success and in safety, completing a tour of eight hundred miles, through a wilderness, in sixty-two days. His duties were so well performed, that his Excellency extended his confidence, and conferred upon our pioneer the military command of no less than three garrisons, with the rank and commission of Captain. These garrisons were upon the Virginia frontiers, and meant to protect them from the incursions of the Shawanees, who had broken out in bloody war. This outbreak is one that will be remembered by the reader, when told that it originated in the wanton butchery, by Colonel Cresap, of the family of the friendly chief Logan. The speech of this famous warrior, as preserved by Jefferson, will never be forgotten, so long as natural eloquence, enlivened by the most cruel

provocations, and sharpened by justice, holds a place among the recollections of men. This pathetic performance furnishes the justification of a war begun by the Shawanees. They were defeated, but not till after a bloody struggle. Several severe battles took place between them and the border militia, and one, in particular, at the mouth of the Great Kenhawa, in which the Indians were heavy sufferers. What share Boon had in these conflicts is not told us by himself. His modesty only permits us to know that he had a responsible command in the hour of danger; and we know that he acquired the confidence of the authorities for the execution of his trusts. He gives us no details, and as his position was a subordinate one, the chronicles are silent on the subject of his claims. But his fame had spread and was still spreading. Already the tradition had reached the settlements of a great and fearless pioneer—the first white man who had ever dared to pass alone into that howling wilderness, upon which even the Indians themselves had agreed to confer the terrible name of the "Dark and Bloody Ground." Such is the signification of the Indian word, "Kentucky"—a name conferred rather in regard to the uses of the region, than to its real characteristics or external appearance. It had been the battle ground for a thousand years, of as many different nations. Unoccupied by any, it was a debateable land, to which they wandered constantly, in squads varying from three persons to as many hundred, with a view to the spoils of the chase or of war. War, in short, is an absolute necessity of all the Indian tribes, as it is the simple consequence of the life of the hunter. When, in pursuit of game, two tribes encounter in the same hunting grounds, conflict is inevitable. And in proportion to the increasing scarcity of game, will the feelings of hate become embittered. A people who live by the chase must always be savage.

Our hunter next appears in a somewhat more dignified capacity. He is solicited by a company of North Carolina gentlemen to attend a treaty at Watauga, to negotiate with the Cherokees for the purchase of a tract of land on the south side of the Kentucky river. He did so in March 1775—made the purchase, and was appointed to explore the country and open the way for the proprietors. Discretionary powers were given to our hunter,

and with a number of chosen men, well armed, he sets out upon the expedition. At the treaty thus made at Watauga, when the instrument was signed, a venerable Indian took Boon by the hand, and said to him—"Brother, we have given you a fine land, but I believe you will have much trouble in settling it." The first steps which he took for this purpose, proved the justness of this opinion. Within a few miles of the site of Boonsborough, a settlement which he subsequently made, the party was fired upon by the Indians, two men slain and two wounded. Boon stood his ground and beat off the enemy. Three days after, they had another attack, in which two more were slain and two wounded. The Indians were again defeated, and the party succeeded in reaching the Kentucky river without further loss. On the first day of April, they struck the first axe into the timbers from which rose the fortress of Boonsborough. On the fourth day, the Indians slew one of their men, but the work advanced to completion. Boon then proceeded to remove his family to the spot, which he did in safety. "My wife and daughter," he exclaims, with, as we may suppose, a natural exultation, "were the first white women that ever stood on the banks of the Kentucky river."

But the establishment of the fortress was the signal for war. It immediately drew, as to a centre of attraction, the roving tribes by which the country was traversed. They harassed the settlers while building it, and now maintained almost constant watch about the precincts; and every inadvertence of the emigrant—if he forbore for a moment his precautions—if he wandered beyond a certain limit—he paid the penalty with wounds or death. Their hostility was still farther stimulated by British and Tory influence. The revolutionary war had begun, and our benign mother of Great Britain had already filled the forest with her emissaries, fomenting their always eager jealousy, and the common appetite for war and plunder. While Congress were making the declaration of independence, at Philadelphia, Boon was already waging the conflict. One of his severest trials was now at hand. On the fourteenth of July, 1776—his daughter, with two other girls, the children of Col. Calaway, were made captives by the Indians, within gun shot of the fort. The alarm was soon given, and

Boon, with a small party of eight men, immediately began the pursuit. A keen hunter, well versed in Indian customs, cool and determined, he pressed the chase with an acuteness and earnestness that soon brought him within sight of his object. He overtook the Indians two days after, brought them to battle, slew two of their number, and recovered all the girls. These are the simple facts. The reader must conceive for himself the feelings of the father, the terrors of the children, the skill of the hunter, the courage of the pioneer—all brought into liveliest action, and forming a natural romance not less full of interest because, in the history of our forest settlements, it has become a very common one.

The year of 1777, found Kentucky sprinkled with settlements of the whites—rude block-houses, isolated out posts, that specked the wilderness imperceptibly, like dots that stand for islets on some great map of the nations. Among the new settlers following the example of Boon, may be mentioned as particularly distinguished by the chief characteristics of their predecessor, the names of James Harrod, Benjamin Logan, and Capt. Thos. Bullitt. Harrod, like Boon, was a man framed in the very prodigality of nature. He was six feet high, and straight as an arrow. His muscular power and activity were immense. His eyes and hair were dark, his face animated, but his deportment grave —as is usually the case with persons of great pride of character, who have been reared in seclusion. This is a trait of the aborigines, and of all people living in communities sparsely occupied. Gentle and conciliating in manner, frank in conversation and very fluent. Harrod, who had never known any thing better in the way of education than an "old field school," was yet a highly accomplished gentleman. He was schooled by those influences that best bring into exercise the capacities of the man. He had lived among men, had been taught by the pressing necessities of life, and what he knew was known thoroughly, as the result of his own experience. His courage was generous to the last degree. He seemed as superior to selfish fears as to selfish gains, and was ever on the alert to serve and to save the suffering. Tidings are brought him that a party of Indians, four miles off, have murdered one of their neighbours. "Boys," he says to those about him—"we will go and punish the red rascals." He is the first in danger, the

last in retreat. Does a poor family need food, he volunteers his rifle in their behalf, seeks the forest, kills the game and brings it home to the destitute. Does a horse wander beyond the range, and into forests in which the savage is just as likely to lurk as not, he mounts his own, and dashes boldly into the thicket. Harrod was a true specimen of our forest gentleman—a man above meanness—a frank and earnest nature—with impulses the most generous, and a courage the most spontaneous—independent in thought, fearless in action, frank in council, modest in opinion, and always manly in behaviour. His memory, as it should be, is still properly honoured in Kentucky.

Not unlike him, in many respects, were the other pioneers, whose names have been given. Benjamin Logan aimed at high distinctions in military and civil life. He was a man of thought as well as action—a firm, clear-headed man, of large executive mind, a decided will, great fortitude, courage and judicious conduct. He was of Boon's exploring expedition, in 1773, and subsequently had a share in that of Lord Dunmore, in 1774.

Of Captain Bullitt we have a few particulars which sustain fully his claim to rank honourably with the first and master spirits of this forest region. He was one of the first to approach the rapids of the Ohio—a scene of terror to the inexperienced boatmen of those days, in their boats hollowed from logs, or in the frailer vessels of bark employed by the Indians, which effectually paralyzed the courage of those who sought to descend the stream. A torrent that rushes at the rate of ten miles an hour, down a succession of rocky ledges, foaming white through their dark passages, and sending up a roar as of dreadful strife, might well discourage and daunt the inexperienced boatman. But Bullitt explored the channel, and was the first to conduct the bark of the way-farer to security in a port, in the very mouth of the warring waters—a safe and commodious harbour on the side of the Kentucky river—safe from the danger and rendered more lovely by the contrast of its sweet repose with the chafing billows beside which it seemed to nestle. Here, the explorer made his settlement. He died prematurely, after having won, by his judgment, his courage, his address, and great resources, the complete confidence of all with whom he came in contact. Other names

might be given, bold, strong hearted and adventurous spirits, framed like these for enterprise and endurance, who had already dotted the face of the great Kentucky wilderness, with the fires of a rude civilization. Their settlements united the fortress with the wigwam. The fort of the white man, in those days and regions, consisted of a central block house and contiguous cabins enclosed with palisades. The woods were cut down within a given distance, and none were permitted to straggle beyond certain limits. These were the places of safety and rendezvous—the stages made by all new comers—the places of refuge upon alarm—points of as much importance as the isolated chalêt among the mountains of the Swiss.

While Boon was rescuing the girls from a small party of the savages, this wily enemy had simultaneously scattered numerous bands over the wilderness. These, at nearly the same moment, proceeded to attack the various settlements. The general movement was politicly conceived, in order to prevent the relief of one post by another. They did not succeed against any of the posts, except in the murder of an occasional settler, and the destruction of cattle ; and the year passed off in continual alarms, unattended by any serious injuries. But, on the 15th April, 1776, Boonsborough was beleaguered by a considerable force. Indian weapons and warfare are not particularly adapted to sieges. They have neither battering rams nor cannon, and that caution which is one of their characteristics, forbids any attempt at escalade, even if the use of the scaling ladder were known. In besieging an armed station, therefore, the Indian seldom exposes himself to danger, and as seldom betrays his real numbers. But every shrub and hollow in the neighbourhood, tree or rock, dell or dingle, conceals its man—vigilant in watch, prompt to take advantage, and ready for flight or conflict, according as opportunity or necessity counsels. He crawls from bush to bush in his approach, he crouches behind stump or shrub—his patience is inexhaustible while his prey is before him, and while it is possible that victory will reward his vigilance. His wars were seldom bloody until he encountered with the Anglo-Norman, and then he paid the penalty of an inferior civilization. The loss of a warrior was a serious event—the taking of a single scalp was a triumph. To gain but

one shot at a foe, an Indian would crouch all day in a painful posture; and the loss of five warriors, would greatly discourage a daring war party. To contend properly with such foes, needed a patience and vigilance like their own, and the exhibition of these qualities on the part of the whites, very soon depressed their audacity. Boon was too familiar with their character to be led into error, and they soon abandoned the leaguer of his post. He lost but one man slain and four wounded. Their own losses were carefully concealed from the garrison. A second attempt was made by double their former number—two hundred Indians—in the July following. They maintained the siege but forty-eight hours and had seven men killed, when they departed precipitately. The loss of the garrison was but one man slain, and two wounded. Boonsborough had a garrison of but twenty-two men. Logan's fort was besieged on the nineteenth of the same month, by another party of two hundred Indians. The garrison consisted of fifteen men; of these, two were slain and one wounded. The assailants were baffled in every instance, but nevertheless wrought considerable mischief to the infant settlements. But these were now beginning to be strengthened from the frontiers. Emigrants frequently joined their ranks. Boon had scarcely been freed from the immediate presence of his foes, when forty-five men came in from North Carolina, succeeded, a month after, by a party of one hundred under Col. Bowman from Virginia. But, in due proportion to their increase of numbers, were the increased hostility and numbers of the savages; and, for the term of six weeks from this accession of strength, scarcely a day passed without some skirmish, in some quarter, between the parties. But the "Long Knife," as the borderers had been for so long a time called by the Indians, at length proved their superiority in spite of their inferior numbers. The latter no longer ventured on open warfare —no longer attempted sieges, but, placing themselves in ambush along the paths, lay in waiting for chance successes. Boon was destined, in person, to reward the patience and vigilance of one of these parties. He had been fighting day by day against the enemy, and always with success. He tells us none of his achievements. But he who has any conception of the peculiarities, the terrors and the vicissitudes of savage warfare, can readily conjec-

ture the scout by night, the ambuscade by day, the surprise, the sortie, the fierce hurra of the borderers, and the ghastly whoop of the savage. Our forest hero had braved or displayed all these, with the coolness of one whose composure of nerve nothing could disturb, and the enemy had disappeared from before his face. His fortress was no longer threatened, and the infant colony began to flourish in such a manner as to inspire the inhabitants with too much confidence in their fortunes. Whether Boon himself too soon relaxed in his vigilance—whether it was by his own or the neglect of others that the event happened which we are about to relate—cannot now be determined. But on the seventh of February, 1778, he was captured by a party consisting of one hundred and two Indians and two Frenchmen. He had gone out with a force of thirty men to the Blue Licks, on Licking river, to make salt for the several garrisons. Finding himself without power of escape, he capitulated for the safety of his party, and was treated well by his captors. How the Frenchmen came to be assailants against the American settlers, at a time when France and the United States were on friendly terms, and about to form an alliance offensive and defensive against the British, it is not easy at this time of day to guess. In all probability, the Frenchmen in question were mere renegades, indifferent to all European authority, and seeking the gratification of a passion for strife and plunder fully equal to that of the savages; or they may have been captives to the Indians on some previous occasion, and, adopted into the tribe, had readily amalgamated with the red men. It is known that the French, in all their intercourse with the Indians, proved themselves much more flexible than the more stubborn Anglo-Saxon, were more popular with the natives, and frequently led their warriors to battle. In the Cherokee wars of 1757–8, French officers were scattered all over the interior, counselling and fomenting the savages to strife.

Boon and his party were treated with kindness by his captors. They were conducted first to Old Chilicothe, the principal Indian town on Little Miami, and, subsequently, Boon, with ten of his men, were conveyed to the British post of Detroit, held by Governor Hamilton. On these two journeys, Boon's deportment was such that the Indians became absolutely charmed with him; so

much so, that they refused to leave him with Hamilton, though that officer offered them one hundred pounds sterling for his ransom with no other view than to give the Captain his parole. Boon also acknowledges the kindness of several English gentlemen who offered to supply his wants, and would have pressed many gifts upon him—all of which, however, with the simple pride which formed so large an element of his character, he firmly but thankfully declined. His valour, his fortitude, his skill, his integrity, had all impressed themselves upon the Indians with whom these are the paramount virtues. His fame had evidently reached the remotest parts of the northern British settlements, and his personal deportment, when he was encountered, had justified the golden opinions he had won.

His ten followers were left as prisoners at Detroit, but he was taken back to Chilicothe. Here he was adopted into a family, became a son, and won greatly upon the affection of his new parents, his brothers, sisters, and their friends. He preserved his cheerfulness, and this was a great virtue in their eyes. He had no complaints, no murmurs, put on no evil brows, obeyed their instructions, and grew friendly and familiar with all around him. He won their applause at their shooting matches, though, as it would seem, rather by shooting ill than well. The Indians, vain of their skill, do not like to be beaten, and the good sense and tact of our forester never suffered him to show the superiority which he possessed. "I was careful not to exceed many of them in shooting, for no people are more envious than they in this sport. I could observe in their countenances and gestures the greatest expression of joy when they exceeded me; and when the reverse happened, of envy." The King of the Shawanees treated him with particular favour, and, after awhile, he was suffered to hunt alone, and at liberty, as one in whom they had entire confidence. For a time he maintained his fidelity, and brought in regularly the spoils of his hunting, but he meditated escape the while. They take him to the salt springs on Scioto, where his time, for ten days, is employed either in hunting, or in making salt. When he returns to Chilicothe, he was alarmed by the sight of four hundred and fifty chosen warriors, armed to the teeth, and covered with war paint, preparing to go against Boonsborough. This dis-

covery precipitates his resolves. On the sixteenth of June, circumstances seeming to favour his design, he leaves his tribe before day, and reaches Boonsborough on the twentieth—a distance of one hundred and sixty miles. In this flight he ate but one meal. He found the fortress in bad condition, but immediately proceeded to its repair, strengthening the gates and posterns and forming double bastions. Fortunately, the Indians gave him time for this. His flight had determined them to delay the proposed assault. In the mean time their spies cover the country, and the council house is frequently opened for discussion. The savage tribes are getting more and more anxious, as they view the daily progress of the "Long Knife." They begin to dread his number as they dread his peculiar resources, and to see in the presence of such hunters as Daniel Boon, a fearful augury, against which they cannot shut their eyes—a sign of their own extermination, and of that

> "Advancing multitude
> Which soon shall fill these deserts."

They were preparing for a last grand effort, in which they were to make their resources, as they fondly thought, commensurate with their object. But Boon was not intimidated, and while their preparations were yet in progress, he carried the attack into their own country. Meeting with a party of thirty near the "Paint Creek Town," on their way to join the Chilicothians, he gave them battle and dispersed them, without losing a man. Eluding the main force of the savages, then on their march for Boonsborough, he reached that post in safety, and in season for its defence. The enemy appeared before it on the eighth of August. They were four hundred and fifty-four in number, under the command of Capt. Duquesne and eleven other Frenchmen, beside their own chiefs. They had British and French flags flying, though the fort was summoned in the name of his Britannic majesty. These were Canadian Frenchmen.

The danger was a threatening one. The force in the garrison was small. The number of the enemy was unusually large for an Indian force, and they were led by European officers. But the hearts of our people did not fail them. They had succeeded

in securing their horses and cattle within the pickets, and Boon was soon ready with his answer to the stern summons of the foe. "Death," he says to himself, "is better than captivity!" He had already tasted enough of that bitter draught. "If taken by storm, we are doomed to destruction; but we must prevent that and preserve the fort, if possible." His answer to the enemy, whose chief came himself beneath the walls to receive it,—was after a very plain, but a very manly fashion. "We shall defend our fort while a man of us lives. We laugh at your preparations. We are ready for you, and thank you for the time you gave us. Try your shoulders upon our gates as soon as you please;—they will hardly give you admittance."

They knew Boon's firmness of character, and were discouraged by his answer. They resolved to try the effects of cunning rather than valour. Another interview was obtained, and Boon was assured that, by the special instructions of Governor Hamilton, they were only to take captive, and not to destroy them. But of this they declared themselves hopeless, and would be content to treat for peace, and depart quietly, if nine of the garrison would come forth for this purpose. The artifice did not deceive our borderers, but they prepared to comply with the proposal, relying on their caution, their courage, the vigilance of the garrison, and other circumstances, for their safety. The conference was to be held within sixty yards of the garrison,—within rifle-shot, in short,—and this arranged, Boon, with eight others, advanced from the fortress into the plain. Here, at the given distance, the chiefs of the besiegers were met,—the terms of amnesty agreed on, papers drawn, and regularly signed and delivered. "And now," said the Indians with delightful simplicity,—"it is customary on all such occasions for hands to be shaken, in token of future friendship." It was with a rare confidence in the physical strength, the muscle and activity of himself and men, that Boon agreed to this also;—"for," says he, "we were soon convinced that they sought only to make us prisoners." The gripe of friendship, indeed, became a grapple, and the little party of nine were surrounded by the greater part of the Indian army. But, the confidence of our borderer in the courage and conduct of his men, did not deceive him. They threw off their assailants, broke

through the throng, and amidst a heavy but random fire, succeeded in reaching the fortress. But a single man was wounded. Then ensued the battle. The fort was completely environed, and the fight continued with little intermission for nine days. Finding that they made no impression by this mode of warfare, the enemy opened a mine, the shaft advancing from the Kentucky river, which was but sixty yards from the fort. The garrison discovered their object by the discoloration of the river, and proceeded to baffle them in this object by cutting a trench across their subterranean passage. This proceeding became revealed to the besiegers by the clay thrown out of the fort, and effectually served to discourage the further prosecution of their attempt. So far they had gained nothing. They had slain but two of the garrison, and wounded twice that number. They had made no impression upon the firmness of Boon and his companions. Their own losses were very great for an Indian army,—thirty-seven killed, and more than twice that number wounded. Sick of a game so unprofitable, they suddenly disappeared on the 20th of the month, after a leaguer of thirteen days. This was the last attempt upon Boonsborough. It has been asked why the Frenchman who led this force did not attempt escalade. The stockades were but twelve feet high, and every Indian had his tomahawk. The force was five times that of the garrison. But it must be remembered that an Indian army has no men to lose. They will never rush on death. They employ no forlorn hopes. Their policy is never to engage in battle, unless with the chances wholly in their favour. To mount battlements in the teeth of ninety rifles, was a game too hazardous for them to play ; and it is scarcely possible that, even if Duquesne counselled the attempt by storm, the savage chiefs listened to him one moment. That they were busy enough in their own way may be guessed from the fact that the garrison picked up one hundred and twenty-five pounds weight of bullets, to say nothing of the greater number that were buried in the logs of the fortress.

During Boon's captivity at Chilicothe, his wife, despairing of seeing him again, returned with her family to "the settlements." —It was thus that our foresters called the abodes of civilization. As soon as Boonsborough was relieved from its leaguer, and there

seemed no immediate call for his presence, he followed her thither, and once more removed bag and baggage to the wilderness. In the meantime, the war became scattered over the whole face of Kentucky. The white intruder became the common enemy, and the numerous Indian tribes which had heretofore fought among themselves, now concentrated their arms upon him only. Numberless were the conflicts, bloodless or bloody, which constantly took place, in which new men were making themselves distinguished while they laid the foundation for social securities which they themselves were destined never to enjoy. The return of Boon was not a return to quiet or inactivity. He was forever on the alert,—on the watch to assist the stranger, to rescue the captive, to help the distressed. He was always ranging, now as a hunter, and now as a spy,—no region too wild for his adventure, no danger too threatening for his courage and confidence. He passed from duty to duty with a readiness and promptitude that left him no time for repose, and as little for apprehension. Wonderfully fortunate, he did not always escape with impunity. On the sixth of October, while returning with his brother from a scout, they were fired upon from an Indian ambush. His brother was shot down at the first fire, and Boon was closely pursued for three miles,—the Indians trailing with a dog. Availing himself of the first chance, Boon succeeded in shooting the dog, and thus escaped.

The winter which followed was early and severe. The inhabitants suffered greatly, as the corn of the previous season had been very generally destroyed by the Indians. The people lived chiefly on buffalo flesh. But there was a consolation even in the severities and privations of the season, since it confined the savages to their wigwams. With the spring they re-appeared, and obtained some advantages. Captain Ashton, with twenty-five men, was worsted in a fight with a superior number. Ashton was slain, with twelve of his men. Capt. Holden was defeated in like manner with seventeen men, and every day resulted in new disasters. The Shawanees, the Cherokees, Wyandots, Tawas, Delawares, and several others on the northern frontiers, were united against the settlers; and, under the influence of two renegade white men, McKee and Girty, whose deeds have made their

names infamously known throughout the West, were inflamed to constant and bloody activity. The prospects of the new colonies were gloomy enough, and it was equally necessary to inspirit the settlers and to check the Indians. On the 18th August, 1782, Boon, with Colonels Todd and Trigg, and Major Harland, collected one hundred and seventy-six men, and took the trail after an army of five hundred Indians, who had but a few days before assailed Bryant's Station, near Lexington, but without success. They pursued this body beyond the Blue Licks, to a remarkable bend of the main fork of Licking river, and overtook them on the 19th. At first the savages gave way. The pursuers, ignorant of their number, passed the river, pressing the pursuit. The enemy rallied, in a good position, formed the line of battle skilfully, and, satisfied of their great superiority, awaited the attack. It began very fiercely and lasted for fifteen minutes, when Boon's party were compelled to retreat with a loss of 67 men, seven of whom were prisoners. Cols. Todd and Trigg, and Major Harland, were all slain. Boon was the sole leader surviving, and he lost his second son. The battle was terribly bloody while it lasted. The Indians, having lost 64 men slain, put to death four of their prisoners, that the number lost on both sides should be equal. Boon says, that the Indians acknowledged that another fire would have caused their dispersion. The fugitives were met by a party led by Col. Logan, but they came too late; a little sooner, and the defeat must have been a victory, and no such loss would have been sustained. The principal slaughter was made during the flight. When the whites gave way, they were pursued with the utmost eagerness. The river was difficult of passage and some were killed as they entered, some as they swam, others as they ascended the opposite cliffs. The melancholy news was brought in a few hours to Lexington, which it left full of widows.

Boon immediately joined another expedition under Gen. Clark, and once more went in pursuit of the same body of Indians. The pursuit was commenced with great secresy and promptness, and the savages were overtaken within two miles of their towns, but not before they had received the alarm from two of their runners. They fled in confusion, dispersing on all hands, not waiting the attack, and leaving their villages and all they possessed to the fury

of the whites. These hurried, winged with rage and eager for revenge, through many of their towns on the Miami. Nowhere were they withstood. They slew but few of the enemy and took but few prisoners; but they burnt the towns where they came, destroyed their corn, fruits and provisions, and swept the country with desolation. This inroad had its effects. It dispirited the savages, broke up their plans, dissolved their confederacy, and taught them the impossibility of contending, with any hope of success, against the superior resources of the white man. It was Boon's last campaign. But he still remained a wanderer. As Kentucky grew populous, he passed to less crowded regions, removed finally to the Missouri territory, and in upper Louisiana received a grant of 2000 acres of land from the Spanish authorities. He settled at Charette, on the Missouri, some distance from the inhabited parts of the country, and followed the habits of life which delighted his early manhood. He was still the hunter and the trapper, and continued so to the day of his death, which occurred in 1822. A newspaper account represents him as having been found dead in the woods with his rifle in his grasp. Such a finish to such a life, would have been equally appropriate and natural. It is related that, some time before his death, he had his coffin made out of a favourite cherry-tree, upon which, for several years, he bestowed a course of rubbing, which brought it to an exquisite polish. He had reached the mature term of eighty-five years, through vicissitudes, toils and dangers which are apt to abridge greatly the ordinary length of human existence. It will not be thought extravagant, if, in addition to the merits of being a brave and good man, and a great hunter, we consider him a great discoverer also. Standing upon Cumberland mountain, and looking out upon the broad vallies and fertile bottoms of Kentucky, he certainly thought himself so. We have no doubt he felt very much as Columbus did, gazing from his caraval on San Salvador; as Cortes, looking down from the crest of Ahualco, on the valley of Mexico; or Vasco Nunez, standing alone on the peak of Darien, and stretching his eyes over the hitherto undiscovered waters of the Pacific.

Note to the preceding article.—A friend writes us in regard to one item of the preceding article, that we are possibly in error in our description of the physique of Boon. We represent him as a tall man of powerful frame. This description was drawn from various sources which have hitherto been acknowledged as adequate authorities on this subject. Still the point is one which, whatever may be its importance, can scarcely be considered concluded. Our correspondent is not prepared, of his own knowledge, to say that the description is not correct; but he gives a pleasant account of one of his neighbours, on the banks of Pacolet River, in South Carolina—one James Moseley—an old man, truthful, honest, and highly esteemed by all around him, who claimed to have known Boon well, to have frequently slept in his cabin, and been the companion of his wanderings. Moseley died in Union District at the mature term of eighty-four years. He came from the Yadkin to the Pacolet, and lived on the former river, in Boon's neighbourhood, when he made his first trip to Kentucky. Describing him at that period—and he was then in the very fulness of his vigour—Moseley said that he weighed about one hundred and fifty-five, that he was not above five feet eight or nine inches high—was marked by a lively, sparkling blue eye, was very active, a tight, well-made fellow, athletic, and, as we may well suppose, capable of enduring any degree of fatigue within the compass of mortal muscle. We have no reason to suppose that a description so precise, is not in the main correct. Our friendly correspondent answers for Moseley as a witness;—and there is no reason for surprise, when we learn that a great hunter is not a plethoric and over-fed person. Where the labours of the chase are taken on foot, it is but reasonable to suppose that the hunter is a lean man. Such is always the case with the Indians and with our own people, where they attract our attention for their expertness in the woods. Little flesh, a frame rather slight than slender, broad shoulders, narrow hips, and a wiry muscle, are the usual marks of the keen and active hunter. "James Moseley," says our correspondent, "was himself something of a Leather Stocking. He had been a great huntsman in his time, had fought frequently with the Indians, as frequently with the Tories, lived forty years in the same log cabin, was received as a welcome guest by the wealthiest of our people, and died, as he began the world, in poverty, with an unblemished character, and without an enemy. To the last hours of life, he lived upon his own labour, and was indebted for no obligations which he could not and did not recompense." He deserves this record.

ARTICLE V.

CORTES AND THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO.

I.—The Despatches of Hernando Cortes, the Conqueror of Mexico, addressed to the Emperor Charles V., written during the conquest, and containing a narrative of its events. Now first translated into English, from the original Spanish, with an Introduction and Notes, by George Folsom, one of the Secretaries of the New York Historical Society, Member of the American Antiquarian Society, of the Archaiological Society of Athens, etc. New York: Wiley & Putnam. London: Stationers' Hall Court. 1843.

II.—History of the Conquest of Mexico, with a preliminary view of the ancient Mexican civilization, and the Life of the conqueror, Hernando Cortés. By William H. Prescott, author of the "History of Ferdinand and Isabella." "Victrices aquilas alium laturus in orbem."—Lucan. In three volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1843

Spain, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, was the great military nation of Europe. She had served a long and painful apprenticeship, very equally marked by triumphs and abasements, in order to arrive at this proud distinction. Her training had been as severe as it was protracted, and it was not until her petty independent and frequently conflicting states, had become united under one rule, in the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic, that this reputation was rendered unquestionable by her complete ascendancy over foes and rivals. In glancing over the long catalogue of events, the long train of causes and their consequences, by which this happy consummation was at length made sure, the historian almost fears lest he should become the romancer. With all his forbearance, unless the reader will travel with him through the venerable chronicles, he cannot well escape the imputation of having yielded his convictions to his theme, and embarked on the wide sea of historical speculation, rather with the wing of the imagination than the sober, questioning mood of a conscientious

judgment. The temptation to rise above the usual subdued forms of utterance, requisite for history, is equally pressing and peculiar. Never was history, in itself, more thoroughly like romance; never was the narrow boundary between the possible and the certain, more vague, shadowy and subtle. Truth seems to hang forever over the abyss of doubt;—the probable loses itself in a wide empire of uncertainties, in which the historian, trembling always lest he should lose his guide, grasps unscrupulously, at last, upon the nearest forms which promise a refuge for his thought; and is delighted, finally, to lose himself in any faith which will put at rest his incredulity. Well may the reader, as he lingers over the story of wild revenge, chivalrous adventure, and faithless or audacious love, pause and wonder if it be not, indeed, the cunning fiction of the poet, which, through the medium of his fancy, endeavours to beguile his judgment. From the year 712, when Gebel-al-Tarik,—the one-eyed Tarik,—Tarik El Tuerto,—first planted his flag and footstep upon the rocky heights of Calpe, threatening with the pale terrors of the crescent, the fairest regions of the cross, to that day of triumph when Boabdil el Chico, the last and feeblest of the Moorish kings of Spain, turned his back upon the green plains and gave his last sigh* to the gay and gorgeous towers of Granada,—her history was a long march of battle,—a fierce and protracted struggle, day by day and year by year, in which her mightiest and meanest mingled with equal ardour; rejoicing, as it were, in a strife which partook in no small degree of the character of a sacred war,—fought, as it was, against a people who were equally the enemies of their country and religion. The Gothic dynasty, under which the soil of Spain fell into possession of the Moors, though previously long declining, enfeebled by the grossest vices, corrupt by luxury and sloth, and deserving if not ready for a foreign master, did not sink without a noble struggle,—would not have fallen, in all probability, but for the treachery of some of its most trusted captains. The stock, however abused, however forgetful of itself in the hour of prosperity, was a good one, and its virtues survived the

* "*El ultimo suspiro del Moro*," is the poetical title given by the Spaniards to the rocky eminence from which Boabdil took his last look of that city which he "could weep for as a woman, not having the heart to defend as a man."

nation. In the extinction of the tyranny of Roderick the kingdom perished, but the sacred principle of liberty was saved; and, in the wild recesses of the Asturian mountains, under the patriotic guardianship of native princes, the seeds of a mighty empire were planted, whose dominion, in the end, and for a time, like that of Great Britain in present times, bade fair to overshadow, with its wings of conquest, the remotest regions of the habitable globe. The kingdom which was founded in blood by Pelayo,—the great sire of guerilla warfare in Spain,—could only be maintained by his followers with valour. Fortunate was it for the future that it was sustained and strengthened by necessity. Poverty and privation seemed to purify the souls, while they rendered hardy the sinews of the defeated race. With daily struggle came daily increase of virtue, not less than strength,—vigilant instincts, habitual courage and increasing numbers. Eight centuries of conflict brought its fruits, and the long chronicle of wars between the rival races was gloriously finished in the final conquest which rewarded equally the valour and the virtue of the Christian. This long period, distinguished by the most remarkable achievements, whether of masses or of individuals,—achievements in which the stubborn and faithful courage of the Spaniard, was admirably matched by the generous ardour and intrepid spirit of the Moor,—leaving it long a doubt on which banner victory would at last settle with its sunshine,—presents us with one of the grandest romances of military history, second to none of which we read, and fully equal to the Jewish,—from the time of the Kings to the Captivity,—which it somewhat resembles. The empire of Spain, once more rendered unique by the possession of her ancient geographical limits, was prepared, by the training of her sons, for their wide extension. The Moor of Granada sullenly yielded up the lovely regions which he had crowded with the trophies of his peculiar genius, and rendered classic by his peculiar arts and tastes. The Spaniard was at length free to repose from a conflict, which had tried equally his patience and his courage for seven hundred years.

But he had no desire for repose. The labours of his life had not prepared him for the arts of peace. He succeeded to the possessions, but not to the genius of the Moor. He conquered

the works, but not the arts, of his accomplished enemy. Skilled in arms, and skilled in little else, his long wars and constant conquests had endowed him with a swelling and elevated spirit. Something of this temperament might also have been caught from the oriental genius of the people he had overcome. Was he, then, to retire from the triumphs of the field to its miserable toils,—from the glorious enterprises of war, to the meaner arts, the insignificant objects of trade,—from the noble task of conquering kingdoms, to the lowly struggle after petty gains? There was not a Spaniard in the army that witnessed the surrender of the keys of Granada, that would not have wept bitter tears, like those of the Macedonian, if told that this was to be the last victory he should behold,—that he was to have no more triumphs,—that there were no more cities to fall,—no more foes of the faith to overcome,—no more worlds for conquest.

He was destined for better revelations. Happily, as it were, to save a victorious people from the mortification of falling into undignified repose,—at the very moment while their salvos yet rang along the banks of the Xenil from the courts of the Alhambra, announcing the fall of the last fortress which the enemy possessed in Spain,—and while the question might naturally be supposed to address itself to the heart of the ancient veteran, and the bold young cavalier—what next are we to do,—whither shall we now turn,—where seek the foe,—in what quarter achieve the conquest?—even at such a moment, and as if in order to answer these doubts and inquiries, a strange prophet rose up amongst them,—a noble, grey-headed and grey-bearded prophet, after the fashion of the ancient Jewish patriarchs,—a mild and gentle father, sweetly faced, sweetly spoken, who spoke as one filled with a faith,—confident as from heaven,—not to be driven from his purpose,—not to be baffled in the new truths, however disputable, which he came to teach. He preached a new crusade,—he announced new empires yet to be gathered within the blessed fold of Christ,—empires of the sun, of a nameless splendour, such as might well throw into shadow and forgetfulness even the lovely region just rescued from the Moslem grasp. Lucky was the moment, as well for himself as for the conquering army, when Christopher Columbus presented himself, for the last time, before

the sovereigns of Leon and Castile. It was, perhaps, quite as much to give employment to restless enterprise, as with the hope of conquests in new lands, that rendered his painful pilgrimages at last successful. Strange as were his promises and predictions, —grossly improbable and evidently imperfect as his theories appeared when examined by the lights, in that early day for science, in the possession of Christian Europe,—there was something in the assurance which it gave of valorous employment, too grateful, too glorious, not to compel a certain degree of credence in the hearts of a military nation. It was to the hope rather than to the faith of Spain, that the great prophet of American discovery addressed himself; and, only half believing, yet yearning to believe, they permitted him to throw open to their arms and eyes, the ponderous and immeasurable gates of the Atlantic. It would be perfectly safe to assume, that, as no nation but Spain could be persuaded to attempt the discovery of the new world, so no people but hers could, at that period, have succeeded in its conquest. Hers alone was the sufficient training for such bold designs,—such a grasp of ambition, such habitual and enduring courage in pursuit. The protracted struggle with the Moors, at which we have briefly glimpsed, had prepared her for the most audacious adventures. It was in consequence of the severe lessons acquired in that school of chivalrous courage and military conduct, that she was able to send forth such a throng of captains, —and such captains,—worthy of her people and of the wondrous empires which they were yet to win. The conquest of America —Peru and Mexico—was only the last act in the conquest of Granada. They were parts of the same great drama, which, compressing epochs into hours, and the events of long ages into a life, we might properly entitle, "The last days of Spanish glory." The spirit which effected the delivery of Spain from the footsteps of the heathen, was the same spirit which impelled her arms against the heathen who was yet unknown. In many instances the performers were the same. The scene was varied, not the action. The heroes, but not the ideal sentiment of heroism which prevailed with both. Had Granada not fallen, Spain would not have dared to take the seal from the unknown waters. The enterprise might have enured to John of Portugal or Henry of

England, or might have been left over to the present days of steam and commerce.

It does not affect the propriety of this opinion, that the persons most prominently distinguished in the Spanish wars with the Moors, do not appear in the first enterprises of Columbus. The spirit of an age is something which, happily, survives a generation. It was but natural that the war-worn captain should retire, and yield place to his successor, the page and esquire, who had buckled on his harness. They had been taught by his skill, stimulated by his example, counselled by his precept. With his banner, they caught up his enthusiasm. They were not unworthy of their training. The pupil did rare honour to his master by surpassing him,—carrying his deeds of daring and chivalry to a pitch of splendour, which must preserve the history of both, with the greatest and noblest of the past, to all succeeding times. Spain was one great school of romance and romantic daring. The spirit which had led the crown to conquest was a common possession of the people. Such a possession is not easily extinguished. It goes on, working silently, perhaps, but still working, and still producing fruits. For ages after the extinction of national freedom, this spirit will break out, reviving all the past, and rescuing a people from their thraldom. In Spain, when Columbus preached the new world, and long after, it was a triumphant spirit, working wonders, and every where astonishing the world by its successes. Such captains as Gonzalvo de Cordova,—the Great Captain, as they fondly style him,—then busy in the wars of Italy,—Hernando Cortés, Vasco Nunez de Balboa, the Pizarros, De Soto, Almagro, Ojeda, Ponce de Leon, etc., were all remarkable men,—worthy to take rank in the best military annals of the Roman Republic. Distinguished by rare courage, they were not less so by their great coolness and sagacity. They were no boy-warriors, famous at a charge, but feeble in every other respect. They could think as well as strike—endure as well as inflict,—of admirable judgment in moments of doubt,—of martyr-like firmness in moments of depression. We do not often meet with such men, even singly, in the history of other nations. Here we encounter them in groups, in families, of unequal merit, perhaps, as individuals, yet how distinguished—how superior,

even when least prominent. It is usual to ascribe to the sagacity of Ferdinand—himself no warrior—the immense power and height to which Spain arose under his administration, and after it, in the hands of his successors;—but we should be doing great wrong to history, were the concession to be made to the sovereign, without specially referring to these mighty subjects,—if we passed regardlessly their claims, nor yielded to them the high and palmy merit of having done for their master all that the most loyal attachment, seconded by the most liberal endowment, as well of nature as of art, could possibly bring to the support and glory of a sovereign. If the distinguishing test of greatness be held, as it has been, to be the ability, in the worst times, and with the worst means, of achieving the most wonderful results,—then, certainly, it cannot be denied that these Spanish captains, whether the theatre of action be the sierras of Alpuxarra, or the wild passes of Central and of North America, not only proved themselves great, but the very greatest of warriors—distinguished by an audacity which seemed to regard no achievement worthy of attempt, which danger did not absolutely environ,—no danger, as beyond the endeavours and aims of a fortune, which had already plucked its brightest honours from the worst!

Were we in the mood, after the fashion of Mr. Carlyle, to endow a modern Pantheon with Hero-divinities, we should not hesitate to choose, from the crowd of heroes who might fairly present themselves for this distinction, as ranking honourably with the worthies of the past, the young adventurer from Medellin, Spain, by name Hernando Cortés. In making this selection, however, we must not be misunderstood. We are expressing, by this preference, only that sort of admiration which we yield to military greatness,—to the man of mere performance,—the hero,—in the case of Cortés, we may say, the politician,—the man of iron nerves, of inflexible composure and fortitude,—doing without questioning,—prompt, brave, cruel,—resolute to win the game, once begun, at whatever sacrifice, the prize of which is to be the great and perhaps unenviable distinction of which we have spoken. Our eulogium, therefore, is necessarily qualified. We must not be understood as regarding this species of greatness, as the highest,—as deserving our unmixed acknowledgments, or, as at all

comparable with that which arises from moral endeavour,—the achievement of intense thought,—of an original framing and endowing intellect,—the soul, living and labouring only for the benefit and the blessing of mankind. The creative mind must always rank very far above the destructive. We have no purpose of confounding these moral distinctions of fame, upon which the better lessons of Christianity are now beginning very generally to insist. The greatness which we now discuss is that of a class,—

"From Macedonia's madman to the Swede,"—

whose renown is acquired, and, perhaps, deservedly, in periods of society which need a scourge, an avenger, an executioner; whose claims to renown rest upon the fact that they are themselves superior to the exigencies of their times, make them subservient to their genius, and out of their blind strength and brutal excesses, evolve a power which, in some degree, contributes to the great cause of human progress. Keeping this distinction and limitation in mind, we do not scruple to declare that the greatest of these modern men was Hernando Cortés,—a man great in a period of great men,—achieving wondrously at a time of wondrous achievement,—displaying the very highest of those mental attributes which give elevation to the brutal deeds of war, at a period when these attributes were numerously possessed by others,—and holding his triumphs with a firmness, and wearing his honours with a meekness, which leaves nothing to be wished for, which sees nothing wanting, in making the comparison of his character, as a whole, with that of any other conqueror, whether of ancient or modern times. Compared with that of Alexander of Macedon, and the career of Cortés will be found to be marked by performances in no respect inferior to those of his predecessor,—in many superior,—in all those, in particular, by which rare endowments are rendered useful and their fruits permanent. Among his virtues, which the other had not, were coolness, modesty, self-restraint and religion. And who shall venture to compare the conquest of a feeble race like the Persian, enervated by the most effeminate luxuries, and emasculated by the most degrading influences of slavery, with the fierce people of Montezuma;—a people by nature warlike, and rendered terribly so by

their sanguinary religion, and the constant domestic conflicts which their religious sacrifices and cannibal appetites equally required them to maintain. It was only in the approach of the Macedonian to the wastes of Scythia, that he found an enemy worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the warriors of Tlascala and Tenochtitlan; and these, if comparable to the Mexican, in mere hardihood and brute courage, were very far inferior to them in the arts,—wanting utterly in those resources of invention and ingenuity which the latter possessed,—upon which valour falls back from defeat, and provides itself anew, by fresh agents and implements, for baffling the progress of a conqueror.

The life of Cortés writes itself. We have long been in possession of its details and of its claims. The works before us scarcely add any thing to our former possessions. They correct small inaccuracies perhaps, they supply some minute deficiencies, they give us a few more details;—but, so far as the achievements and fame of Cortés are interested, they were unnecessary. His name and that of Mexico, are coupled for eternity. They survive together; and the books of his contemporaries, even when written in his studious disparagement, are unavoidably memorials of his greatness. These "letters of Cortés," by Mr. Folsom, are for the first time in an English dress. They are useful,—they facilitate the progress of the student. The translation is neatly and faithfully done. The style is simple, direct and unambitious. The introduction, by which the translator supplies the omission caused by the loss of the first letter of the conqueror, leaves nothing to be desired by the reader. His compilation is equally succinct and comprehensive. The work of Mr. Prescott possesses higher claims to our regard as an original narrative. It is an elegant and eloquent production, rich and copious in expression, yet distinguished by a grace and simplicity worthy of any English historian. It is in the clearness and beauty of his style, and his conscientious and careful analysis of authorities, that Mr. Prescott's chief excellencies lie. We may travel with him confidingly, and yield our faith without hesitation, whenever his conclusions are declared. We have reason to be proud of his production.

Most readers are acquainted with the general facts of this history. The grand outlines of the conquest of Mexico are familiar

to all. They are, perhaps, equally well prepared to believe, that it was one of the most remarkable events on record, whether in ancient or in modern annals. As a study, it cannot be too closely read by him who would learn from example the best lessons of circumspection; of deliberate foresight, governing prudence, and that audacity, which, as if by inspiration or instinct, discerns, at the proper moment, when mere habitual courage and ordinary effort will no longer suffice. To the lover of romance, this is one of the most brilliant—full to overflow, of the very material which his passionate nature most desires—of those

> ——— "disastrous chances
> Of moving accidents by flood and field;
> Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach;
> Of being taken by the insolent foe,
> And sold to slavery—"

Ay, indeed! and something worse than slavery: of being hurried to the highest towers of Moloch,—stretched out on the bloody stone of sacrifice, and impaled,—head downward, perhaps,—flayed alive before the most horrid of all blood-smeared, brutal divinities,—the breast laid bare,—the heart plucked forth, hot and quivering, and flung to the savage god, even while the flickering consciousness yet lingers in the straining eye-balls of the victim. These, and such as these,—terror-rousing, horror-raising pictures,—are to be read in this most wondrous history,—a history, we may say again, almost without a parallel.

Cortés was the born-hero of this history. We have a faith in this providential adaptation of the agent to the work. We believe that each great man has his mission. We are not now speaking of great men in the newspaper sense of the term,—not your little great men,—great on the stump, in the canvass, in the management of parties and committees. Of the kind of greatness to which we now allude, the world is never overstocked. Our great men are not men of every day. They arise once in an age, and are the saviours—at least, the representatives of that age. They distinguish it by a mark, and it thence remains unforgotten. They embody its highest virtues, its most eminent characteristics. They do for it what cannot be so well done by any other person

—what is done by no other person—and what, until they have shown the contrary, is thought by all other persons to be beyond the reach of performance. They are the people who show, like Alexander, how the knots of Gordius may be untied; like Columbus, how eggs may be made to stand on their own bottoms; like Cortés, how the fierce, gold-loving Spaniard, faithless to all beside, may yet be won to follow the footsteps of one man, in the face of seeming certain death, with almost worshipping fidelity.

Hernando Cortés was the chosen hero of this great conquest. He had all the requisite endowments for the work. The eye of foresight, directing with the most consummate prudence; the deliberate resolve, which never changes its aspect nor swerves from its course when it has once received its impulse from matured reflection; the capacity, so to fathom the souls and resources of the men, his subordinates, as to be able to assign, at a moment, the particular duty to each which he is best able to perfrom; the nerve, never to falter or suffer surprise; the will, never to recede when taught by deliberate conviction to advance; the courage, which, not shrinking from fearful deed when necessary to be done—when necessary to safety and success—yet never indulges in wanton exercise of power;—yields to no bloody mood, no wild caprice of passion, and is beyond the temptations of levity; great physical powers for performance and endurance; a valour swift as light; a soul as pure as principle; a quickness of thought; a promptitude of perception; a ready ingenuity; a comprehensive analysis of difficulties and resources;—these, with many other virtues of character, active and passive, might be enumerated, to establish his claims to the high place which we are prepared to assign him. Of the great moral question, whether the conquest itself might not properly have been forborne,—whether it were justified, not merely by the morals of nations—such morals as nations then possessed—but under the intrinsic and inevitable standards of right and religion;—we shall say nothing. This is a question which we need not here discuss. Tried by the moral judgments of our day, and there would be but one opinion upon the Mexican conquest; such an opinion as we are all prepared to pronounce upon the murderous warfare recently pursued by the English among the junks and cities of

the Chinese. The mind naturally revolts from the idea that justification can be found for any conqueror, wantonly overthrowing the altars, defiling the homes, and slaughtering thousands of a people who have offered no provocation to hostility,—whose lands lie remote from the invader,—whose interests and objects conflict not with his, and, whose whole career has been, so far as he is concerned, of an equally innocent and inoffensive character. And, when this invasion and butchery occur in the history and at the expense of a people so far advanced in the arts of civilization as the Mexicans, the enormity becomes exaggerated, and—were we not to consider the standards of morality prevalent in the time of the conquest, and the farther apparent justification to be found in the sanguinary and horrible practices of the Mexicans themselves—our sentence would be one of instant and unqualified condemnation. But, discarding this inquiry, and leaving the question open for future moralists, let us pass to a rapid survey of the prominent events in the life of the remarkable man by whom the conquest of Mexico was undertaken and achieved.

Hernando Cortés was born at Medellin, a little town of Estremadura, in the year 1485. He sprung from the people. When he grew famous, the biographers, as if anxious to show that nature could not be the source of greatness, contrived to discover that he was of noble family and illustrious connections. The probability is that this is mere invention. Enough for us that he was a man. Fortunately for him, he was a poor one. The energies of his original nature were not sapped away by artificial and enfeebling training. He had all the proofs, in his character, of having come from sturdy stocks, with a genius uncramped by sophistication. Nature was left tolerably free to work her own will on her favourite. Happily, if schools and colleges did little to improve, they did as little to impair his genius. At an early period, he gave proof of some of those qualities by which he was finally distinguished. With great ardency of temper, he betrayed a resolute will and an independent judgment,—qualities which, though they may sometimes arise from mere blood, are yet quite as frequently the distinguishing attributes of inherent capacity, which, in the consciousness of its own resources, is anxious for their development and irks at all restraint which delays their

exercise. They would make him a student of law at Salamanca, but, though the age and country were decidedly military, Spain was already overstocked with lawyers. Cortés felt no call to this profession, let his parents call never so loudly. He was sent into the world for very different uses. He was a man of action, rather than a wrangler,—of deeds, not of words. His words, however much to the purpose, were usually but few; and the profession of law, in Spain then, as in our day, called for unnatural copiousness. The motives were sufficient for eloquence, then as now, to swarms of hungry seekers; but these motives moved not him. His soul needed a higher stimulus than avarice. He obeyed his destiny, abandoned the pen for the sword, and, at seventeen, we find him preparing to join the army of the great Gonsalvo. But Italy was not to be the theatre of his performance. Fate interfered to keep him from that subordinate position, into which, at his early age, and in the ranks of a warfare filled up with the veterans of the time, he must have fallen. Nay, a farther training was necessary in less arduous employments. His sinews were not yet sufficently hardened, his frame not sufficiently formed, his temper not enough subdued, for fields of active warfare. Napoleon, in after days, said to the French, "send me no more boys—they only serve to fill the hospitals." The military career of Cortés, the work for which he was wanted, needed more time, more preparation, a better training than had been his. He fell sick, and, before he recovered, the time for marching had gone by. Italy was no longer open to the adventurer, and he turned his eyes upon the Atlantic. Impatient for action, circumstances seem about to favour his desires. His kinsman, Ovando, is made governor of Hispaniola. With him he determines to set sail. All things are in readiness, but his fortune, as if the fruit were not yet ripe for his hands, again interposes, and again, through the medium of suffering, prevents his departure. It is one characteristic of heroism, that it must be doing. The blood of Cortés required to be kept in exercise. Your knight-errant, fierce in conflict, is equally fond in dalliance with the fair. Love seems naturally to supply the intervals of war. Nothing, indeed, would seem more natural than that the ardency of the warrior

should be equally great in all fields of combat. It is Mr. Moore who sings—

> " 'Tis always the youth who is bravest in war,
> That is fondest and truest in love."

Of the truth of our hero's passion in the present instance, but little need be said. Of its earnestness, we may make the most ample admissions. It must be remembered that he was still only seventeen. Impetuosity of character is scarcely matter of reproach at such a period. As eager after beauty in that day, as, in after years, in pursuit of less hazardous conquests, we find him incurring, with blind passion, dangers almost as serious. He must serenade his mistress before parting. Nay, there are fond last words to be spoken,—and he attempts to scale her windows. We must not look too austerely on this achievement. The gallantry of Spain was never of a very sensual order. It was so much mingled with pride and romance, that it became elevated with sentiment. The guitar and the serenade, borrowed from the tender and voluptuous Moor, implied, in the practice of the graver Spaniard, little more than a platonic passion. At least, it is but charity, at this late period, and in the case of a person so very young, to prefer such a conclusion. Besides, in the absence of any knowledge on the subject of the damsel, it would be improper to put any scandalous interpretation on the adventure. A last song, a last sigh—nay, a last kiss—may be permitted to the parting lover, about to pass, seeking his fortune, over that wilderness of sea, into that wilderness of savages that lay beyond. Certain it is, that, whether encouraged or not, our hero, hurried by passion beyond propriety, was precipitated from a crumbling wall, and spared more serious injuries at the expense of a broken limb.

The expedition sailed without him, and, tossing with feverish fiery pulses on a bed of sickness, he was compelled to stifle his impatient yearnings for adventure with what composure was at his command. His eager, impetuous nature, drew good from these disappointments. They formed portions of a necessary training for the tasks that were beyond. They taught him to curb his eager soul, to submit to baffling influences, to meditate calmly his resolves, to wait upon events and bide his time. Did the

world go smoothly with the boy, he might never be the man. Rough currents bring out the strength, and teach the straining muscles of the swimmer.

But Cortés was not always to be baffled. He sailed for Hispaniola in 1504, when but twenty years of age, and reached the desired port in safety. Here he was well received by his relation, Ovando, honoured with a public office, with lands and slaves assigned him. He became a farmer. In this mode of life we may well ask what becomes of his ambition,—his military passion,—that eager temperament whose tides were perpetually driving him upon the rocks. The life of agriculture seems an unperforming one. Its requisitions are grave, subdued and methodical. A quiet nature, a dogged devotion to the soil, would seem its chief requisites. And yet, a purely agricultural people, particularly where they possess slaves, is usually a martial one, —delighting in exercises of the body,—famous in the chase,—admirable in the use of weapons. The management of slaves,—such slaves as the Spaniards had to subdue,—the restless, roving savage of the Mexican archipelago, the blood-thirsty Caribbean, the revengeful and kidnapped native of the Combahee,—required the vigilant eye of a master-spirit. We are not to suppose that the true nature of Cortés was left unexercised while he clung to the sober tastes of agriculture. For six years he pursued this vocation, showing no impatience,—none of that feverish, froward temper which had marked his boyhood. He indulged, as far as we can learn, in no repinings. That he learnt many good lessons in the management of his subjects,—many useful lessons of government as well as of patience and forbearance,—schooling into strength that fiery nature, which, as we have seen, was only apt to lead him into mischief,—we may not unreasonably imagine. At all events, we may conclude him to be exercising a necessary nature in all this period, as it is at variance with all human experience to suppose a great mind to remain satisfied, for any length of time, with a condition which is uncongenial with its ruling characteristics. In 1511, we find him connected with a military expedition for the conquest of the Island of Cuba,—but not in a military capacity. This duty over, he resumed his farm with a diligence that looked like devotion. He was suc-

cessful as a planter. He was the first among the Spaniards to stock his plantation with cattle,—to raise sheep, cows and horses, —in the management of which he betrayed equal pains-taking and success. This was showing singular thoughtfulness in one so young;—singular flexibility of the mental nature, which could thus so readily adapt itself to tasks and exercises in which it had never had any training. Strange, too, that one so ardent, so ambitious, so eager, should thus so easily content himself. We are reminded of other great men;—of Scipio, and Cincinnatus, and Washington. The list might be extended. In this very flexibility —in this singular capacity to subdue and keep himself back until the coming of the proper season,—this resolute forbearance of all vain and immature endeavour,—we behold the essential proofs of greatness. He was able to wait—the most difficult duty of the ambitious. He was able to conceal his true desires—without which capacity few succeed in their development, surrounded as they are by a world of rivals. Very like, there was no will of our hero in this forbearance. This passiveness was none of his own. His moods were in abeyance, under the control of influences, moral and social, to which he was ready to submit, and which he might not seek to fathom. It will not lessen the merits of a great man to believe that he is patient under the direction of a destiny which can better determine than himself the true modes and periods for the application of his powers. To submit, while in the full consciousness of his powers, is, in itself, no small proof of superiority.

But agriculture, however successfully conducted, did not furnish the necessary employment for his genius. His will was shaping out another course. He embarked in commerce,—and prospered as he had done in planting. He was a man to prosper. He carried into trade the same keen vigilance, fixed resolve, persevering endeavour, watchful forethought. This field afforded him occasions for enterprise—brought him extensively known among the men whom he was to guide,—increased greatly the resources of money and credit, without which, at that time and in that community, the opportunity for great adventure was not easily to be found. He became a man of substance, a capitalist, and was called and considered, accordingly, as he would be now,

a very reputable person. So his neighbours thought him. He every where secured their confidence,—his word became an authority,—his word had a significance. He, somehow, compelled their regard and veneration, and his judgment swayed that of older men. That they knew the audacious character of his mood, we may also infer, as we find them choosing him as their representative when a great danger was to be incurred. He did not shrink from the trust, offended Velasquez, the Governor of Cuba, and was honoured with imprisonment in consequence.

From this imprisonment he was soon set free. He was not a man to remain long in any meshes. But this governor of Cuba, who was of a temper equally mean, jealous and vindictive, was of capricious humours, which constantly found cause of annoyance in the character of Cortés. One of these provocations sprang from a cause equally natural and vexing. The constitutional infirmity of our hero—his passion for the sex—does not seem to have suffered much abatement in his farmer and merchant life. An intrigue with Doña Catalina Xuarez de Pacheco, a lady of noble blood—a sister of whom had been married by Velasquez—was revealed to this suspicious dignitary. The governor "was something more than wroth," and the storm which ensued was only hushed by the marriage of Cortés with the lady. This union, which he seems to have been reluctant to approach, he had no reason to regret. Doña Catalina made him a good wife, and followed him to Mexico, where she died some years after the conquest. He was wont to say that he prized her as highly as if she had been the daughter of a Duke.

Though not yet a conqueror, Cortés, as we have seen, has not been living entirely in vain. His career, though comparatively humble, has yet been honourable. It is worthy of remark, that, in all this period—a space of nearly eight years since his arrival in America,—he has not only achieved no military enterprises, but has shown no disposition for arms; a fact sufficiently striking when his previous aspirations are remembered,—doubly so, now that his after career is known, and particularly surprising when we consider how frequent were the examples of military adventure, shown daily by the daring hidalgos of Cuba and Hispaniola. The singular avidity with which, in that day, Spaniards of all

classes embarked in schemes, however wild and visionary, which involved peril, stimulated avarice and gave provocation to valour, might well, we may suppose, awaken that impatient temper which we have seen breaking away from academic walks in eager desire for fields of war,—scaling walls in obedience to the working passions of youth—and, altogether, betraying that forward impetuosity of character which seldom desires weightier suggestion to action than what springs from its own inner tendencies. It would be idle, at this late moment, to seek to account for this remarkable forbearance, or to endeavour to reconcile those seeming caprices of temper, which, were we more familiar with the moral influences acting on his moods, might show them all, however apparently in contradiction, to be working harmoniously together. It is the superficial judgment that finds inconsistencies in character, simply because it never looks below the surface. The restraints on the mind of Cortés, arising from his duties, his interests, or, it may be, and probably was, from a real conviction of his own temporary deficiencies,—compelling patience, must naturally have brought him wisdom. He saw, from the numerous failures and baffling defeats of the cavaliers around him, that the day had not yet arrived,—that the fruit was not ripe,—that there was an accepted season of action, for which courage must be patient. To know "when," is quite as important to achievement as to know "how." Every day sent forth its novel armament from Hispaniola and Cuba. Brave preparations distinguished each adventure,—worthy and valiant cavaliers led the enterprise,—yet how few attained the goal,—how many perished in sad defeat,—how many more came back with ruined health, fame and fortune. The keen, vigilant eye of Cortés, took counsel of strength for the future, as he beheld the weakness of those who went before him. He saw that the hour was yet to come,—they had shown that they were not the men for the hour. May we not suppose, knowing as we do his career, that, at such moments, with such reflections, a fond but secret emotion in his soul informed him, that the hour and the man were destined to co-operate hereafter in his own patiently-abiding self!

It is said by some of the historians that his greatness, in spite of the generosity which he showed, or seemed to show, to his

companions, was tainted by the miserable vice of avarice,—perhaps the meanest and least manly of all vices. To this passion, they allege, are we to ascribe his persevering devotion to his agricultural and commercial pursuits. His liberality to his companions, say they, was only a superior sort of policy, by which he attached them to his person, making them the subservient creatures of his ambition. But the statement involves many contradictions, and assumes for Cortés a variety of passions, all earnest and in action, such as we rarely discover in any person, and which, if in possession of the mind of any man, would be apt to leave him unperforming, a constant victim to the most momentary caprices. Ambition and avarice seldom work together. We are not satisfied that there is not some great mistake in the usually received biography of Marlborough, who is on record for a rare union of these natures, so at conflict,—the one soaring to the summit, the other grovelling at the base of all human appetites and aims. The passions are foes, not twins. There is no affinity between them. The frank, impulsive nature of that sort of ambition which seeks for renown through the medium of arms, is hardly capable of that cold consideration of small gains,—that petty, slavish, matter-of-detail spirit, which is for realizing the pounds by a constant concern for the pence. Ambition is a thing of large generalization, which usually scorns details, and shrinks, with a sort of disgust, from all servile literalnesses. It looks upward, and not, as Mammon, that "least exalted spirit of heaven," upon the gold of the pavement beneath his feet. If its glance is ever cast below, it is only because, perched like the eagle on some sky-uplifting eminence, there is nothing farther to be sought or seen above.

It would be more easy to believe, in the case of Cortés, that he was not understood by his neighbours. As nobody at this period suspected the great military and statesman-like genius which he possessed, so no one could reasonably determine upon those proceedings in his career, the objects of which were latent, and only determinable by the grand results. It is not easy to look back, after the grand march of a conqueror, and sit in just judgment on his first beginnings. It would not, perhaps, be easy for himself to do so, and determine accurately upon his own motives. We

are all so much the creatures of circumstances,—so much led by our own instincts,—that we seem motiveless in a thousand movements, when, in fact, we have been impelled by a secret nature, superior to mere worldly deliberation,—a nature which operates like an instinct, with all the energies, and, seemingly, with all the prescience of a god. Doubtless, Cortés worked under some such influences, without well knowing why he worked and wondering sometimes at his own passivity. Supposing that he conjectured something of his future career, it is natural he should seek the acquisition of fortune,—nay, that he should hoard and secure it with all prudential care, in contemplation of the wondrous enterprises which lay before him. We find him, when the time for these enterprises arrived, frankly embarking all of his fortune in their prosecution. Keeping this fact in mind, there will be no difficulty in accounting for the two-fold desire which he showed, at once to accumulate money, and by the generous use of it, at times, to attach his companions to his arms. There is yet another consideration which needs only to be entertained for an instant, to make it doubtful whether he is justly liable, at any time, to the charge of withholding his resources, or betraying any uncommon or close regard to acquisition. Liberality of mood, like most objects of moral analysis, is a thing of relative respect. Among one set of people, a person shall be held selfish whom another class will esteem as generous in a high degree. Cortés, differing largely from the usual profligacy of Spanish cavaliers,—men reckless equally of past, present and to come,—might naturally enough suffer from their denunciations, yet deserve no reproach of avarice in any justly-minded community. He certainly differed from themselves,—he was no profligate,—he respected laws which they despised,—he was prudent when they were profligate, —sober when they were intoxicated,—firm when they were wild, —and, consequently, triumphant when they failed.

The circumstance that strikes us, over all, and as wonderfully significant of his character, is the calm, unchanging quiet of his life, during the long period of—as we must regard it—his probation. Believing as we do that every great mind has not only some partial knowle 'ge of its own endowments, but some strong presentiments of what are to be its future performances, we are

half disposed to ascribe this seeming lethargy, in his career, to a deliberate purpose of self-training and self-preparation, for the work which was before him. No great mind is entirely without a knowledge of its deficiencies. The greatest minds are those who first and most fully discover them. Cortés felt his infirmities of temper. His nature was originally too fierce and intractable. His blood needed schooling. His impetuosity—and this was the disease of Spanish heroism—would have been the greatest impediment to his conquest of Tenochtitlan. It was only by restraining and subjecting his own, that he could hope to subdue the minds of others to his will. Will is not yielded in the attainment of patience. It is strengthened, made consistent, and doubly intense from its habitual compression. If there were no secret suggestions of his own nature, counselling him to this result, the observant thought of Cortés would have received the lesson from instances hourly before his eyes. It was in consequence of this deficient training, that the brave and gallant cavaliers who preceded him in the march of discovery, and helped to prepare his way, suffered all their disasters. He saw them daily returning in poverty and mortification, who had set forth in all the pride and insolence of spirit which characterized the Spanish chivalry at that wondrous period. He saw that it was not from want of skill or deficient courage, or inferior numbers in the field, that they failed,—but of the proper temper, of the adequate reflection, of the decisive judgment, all of which, operating equally upon the minds of one's followers and foes, make victory inevitable, and reap certainly its fruits.

There were yet other considerations, natural enough to an intellect so well balanced and so greatly endowed as that of Cortés, by which his patience was induced and his career influenced. Conscious that his extreme youth was unfavourable to his claims to command and lead, and unwilling to go upon great enterprises in a subordinate capacity to those by whom they were most likely to be rendered futile, he preferred to wait upon time, and prepare for the more favourable progress of events. The born-leader of men is always thus content to wait, conscious that his mission cannot be wrested from his hands. It is only your spirit, doubtful of itself and destiny, that is forever forestalling time and hurry-

ing prematurely into the field, for the real dangers of which it has made no preparation. In truth, Cortés had been in the field from the beginning, even as the race horse is already master of the prize, whose previous training and exercise has made him sure of it, the moment that the time of trial has arrived. In his seclusion he had been at work. In his retirement he had been making the preliminary conquests which were to secure the greater. His regular habits of industry, his stability of character, his uniform good sense, had secured him friends among the cooler, the more sober and reflective of the population of Cuba and Hispaniola,—so that they were all ready to say, when a man was needed for man-work—*this* is our man! His generosity to his companions, admitted even by those who dwell upon his avarice, had won him other affections among the ardent. He himself was ardent without being insane. Frank in his deportment, easy of address, ready in his intercourse, unassuming even when firmest, and gracious even when unfamiliar, he had contrived to win golden opinions from all sorts of people. Besides, though as yet quite unknown in a military capacity, he had yet, strange to say, acquired the popular confidence in his self-possession, fortitude and courage. His conversation, though animated, was always sensible, and one trait, given by Solis, is worthy of being remembered: "He always spoke well of the absent." With a vigorous constitution, unimpaired by dissipation or disease, he was possessed of great physical strength, and accomplished in all martial exercises. His stature was good and well proportioned, active and robust. His chest was broad and prominent,—his countenance clear, bright and intelligent,—his beard strong and black,—the expression of his eyes lively and amorous,—and, to conclude in a word, and to show the fruits of that period of probation, which, to the careless mind, would seem to have been utterly without fruits,—he was a general favourite with both sexes. Verily, we may begin to conclude, that our farmer and merchant-hero, so far, has not been working entirely in vain. Let the future speak for itself. We are not to forget, however, among the essential and important qualities in the moral constitution of Cortés, that he entertained an abiding sense of the presence of the Deity in all the concerns and workings of humanity.

He was of that earnest, concentrative nature, that all operations of his thoughts were impressed with the serious influences of a deep and still dependent faith. The Deity was always present to his imagination as a constituent motive in his own proceedings. Like Columbus, even when he wrought in error, he flattered himself that he wrought for truth; and it was in some sort a holy sense of indignation at the atrocities which he beheld among the pagan nations, in their loathsome worship, that reconciled him on some occasions to his own savage excesses. These were occasional only. Cortés was among the most indulgent of the captains of the time. He was merciful beyond his age, and could forbear to claim its sanction for crime, even when his own performances would seem to have required it. This religious faith which he possessed, it may be remarked, was one of the chief sources of the audacity of his courage. How should he doubt of the result, who, adopting the banner of Constantine, sees, ever visible in its awful folds, the inscription which pious zeal may well assume to embody an encouraging assurance from Christ himself,—" Amici, Crucem sequamur, et in hoc signo vincemus."

Such was Hernan Cortés,—thus prepared and thus encouraged —when it became his part to enter actively upon that theatre of performance for which his whole nature had been craving. He was called into action at a period most opportune for his ambition. Hitherto, the result of Spanish discovery in the new world, had failed of its expected fruits. The predictions and hopes of Columbus had been verified in part only. The ocean had been disarmed of its terrors,—the gates of the Atlantic had been rolled back, never again to close,—a new world had been given to the empires of Castile and Leon—but the more worldly appetites of the discoverers remained in a great degree ungratified. The fruits of adventure had not recompensed the voyagers. The crown had not realized its outfit. The possessions were barren. Instead of the precious metals and minerals, the drugs and spices, the gems and treasures of the golden Chersonesus, which had been liberally promised by the hopeful imagination of Columbus, a few small and comparatively unproductive islands, in a waste ocean, dependencies of sea and sky alone, were all that he yielded, in confirmation of his dreams and theirs, to the royal

sovereigns whom he represented. He took from the gold of the sceptre in the extension of its sway. He himself never knew the extent and importance of his own discoveries. Within a stone's throw of Yucatan, he veered about capriciously, as if under the wing of a mocking fortune, like another prophet, not permitted to set foot in the Canaan to which he had pointed out the way for his people. Some glimpses of the wonders of Mexican civilization were all that was vouchsafed him, in his last disastrous voyage. He picked up a canoe of unusual size, while on the upper coast of Guatemala, in which were found cotton coverlets, tunics without sleeves, mantles, coverings for the loins,—garments of happy fashion and exquisite texture, wrought with nice skill and delicately dyed in various colours. There were other commodities, weapons of war, choice viands, wines and fruits, and instruments of copper. The great results enured to other men. They penetrated the same waters, and finally made the discovery of Yucatan,—a realm of immense population, filled with cities of equal wealth and pomp and magnitude. But their discoveries bore no fruits corresponding with the promise which they held out to enterprise. The eager avarice, the yearning ambition of the Spaniard, groans with the very impatience of desire at the new prospect. Diego Velasquez, the Governor of Cuba, a man of whom we have already spoken, as mean, avaricious and inconstant, dazzled with the golden and other ornaments which had been plucked from the shrines of false gods in Yucatan, prepared to attempt the conquest of that country. A small armament was sent forth which did not succeed to his desires. His captains did not obey his wishes. Another was prepared, and the command of it was finally given, though slowly and with many misgivings, to his brother-in-law, our farmer, merchant-hero, *Hernan Cortés*. Appointed to this command, Cortés entered upon his tasks with all the energies of his nature. He yielded his whole fortune to the adventure,—he contracted debt in the more earnest prosecution of his work. The enterprise in his hands became popular. Men flocked from the standards of other and long-practised leaders, to follow under his. The dignity, resolution, skill, judgment, with which he proceeded, now alarmed the fears and suspicions of Velasquez. The popularity which he suddenly seemed to ac-

quire, was itself an annoyance. Even the employment of his own wealth in the adventure prompted the capricious governor to apprehend that Cortés designed to make it entirely his own, and cut him off from his share of the profits. The admirable energies put in requisition by our hero, confirmed this fear; and there were not wanting those to whisper in his ears such doubts and suspicions of his captain, as strengthened all his own. Besides, it was remarked that a wonderful change of air and manner had suddenly taken place in our hero. It seemed as though his soul had risen into the consciousness of a new strength. There was a serious elevation of bearing,—a massive and noble-looking loftiness, now distinguishing his deportment—that amply spoke for high and hopeful purposes. Whatever might have been the levities and frivolities of his character before, these immediately gave way to a conduct such as might well become a consciousness of the great achievements which he was about to execute. He was no longer the mere tradesman, chaffering in the thoroughfare,—no longer the plodding farmer, tenacious of his petty cares and sovereignty. Velasquez saw in his newly-assumed carriage, a spirit too strong for his control,—too independent and too inflexible to submit patiently to the will of an inferior. Weak and irresolute himself, he trembled for his share in the enterprise, and heartily repenting of the trust confided to Cortés, he determined to withdraw from him its command. But this was not so easy of execution as resolve. While yet he hesitated, not daring to proceed openly, dreading a rupture with a person equally adroit and popular, Cortés saw into the secret misgivings and purpose of his narrow and apprehensive spirit. He was, perhaps, apprized of it by others, for he had friends on every side. His resolves were prompt and decisive of his character. He suddenly set sail for the port of St. Iago, contenting himself with a courteous but distant salute to the governor, who watched his progress at some distance from the shore. The latter had not anticipated this proceeding, or his own might have been more prompt. He knew that the preparations of Cortés were far from complete, and fancied that he should have sufficient time at any moment to arrest him. But the jealousy which waits upon time, is apt always to lose the occasion, and he who deals with rival or suspects him, must

never postpone performance till the sunlight. Of the various attempts made by Velasquez to defeat the enterprise, or, at least, to deprive Cortés of all participation in it, details are unnecessary. They were equally ungenerous and unsuccessful, and Cortés seems to be wholly justified in the opinions of the moralist, in finally throwing off all connection with his brother-in-law. His keen vigilance, resolute character, and, we may add, his favouring fortune, enabled him to baffle all the efforts of his enemy, and these were continued with equal pertinacity and spite long after our hero had won his way to the city of Montezuma. Some of these efforts may command our more particular notice hereafter. Enough, however, that, in defiance of strifes on shore and storms at sea, we find the fleet of Cortés, early in the year 1519, safely moored at the appointed rendezvous at the island of Cozumel. Of this place, which is now deserted, the reader will find some interesting particulars, in the late work of Mr. Stephens on the antiquities of Yucatan.

Thus, then, at the age of thirty-three, Cortés stood on the threshold of his great career. We have spoken of his physique and personal appearance,—of his great vigour and elasticity of frame,—of his pleasing countenance, and the general attractiveness of his bearing. It remains to say, that he excelled in fencing, horsemanship, and all other of the military and chivalrous exercises of the age. He was temperate, indifferent to what he ate, regardless of privation, capable of enduring any toils in common with the meanest foot-soldier. He was not heedless of the impression produced by fitting costume, and wore ornaments, which were usually more remarkable for their richness and value than their show.

His armament consisted of eleven ships, under as many captains. On the 10th February, 1519, he reviewed his forces at Cape St. Antonio. "They amounted to one hundred and ten mariners, five hundred and fifty-three soldiers, including thirty-two cross-bowmen, and thirteen arquebusiers, besides two hundred Indians of the island, and a few Indian women for menial offices. He was provided with ten heavy guns, four lighter pieces called falconets, and a good supply of ammunition. He had besides sixteen horses." With this force did this great man enter upon the

conquest of the magnificent, the strong, the warlike and numerous people of Tenochtitlan, and the contiguous nations. His review was closed with a speech, almost the only speech on record of a great warrior, the promises of which were amply verified by the result. He told them, just as if he had himself beheld it all, of the extent, the danger, the glory of the enterprise in which they were about to engage. He was about to lead them, he said, to countries more vast and opulent than any they had known, and the conquest of which must make them famous to all succeeding ages. "But," said he, "these are to be won only by incessant toil. Great things are achieved only by great exertions. Glory was never the reward of sloth. If I have laboured hard and staked my all in this undertaking, it is for that renown which is the noblest recompense of man. But, if any among you court riches more, be but true to me, as I will be to you and to the occasion, and I will make you masters of more than Spain has ever dreamed of. You are few in number, but strong in resolution. If this does not falter, doubt not that God, who has never failed the Spaniard in his battle with the infidel, will shield you, though encompassed by a cloud of enemies. Your cause is just—you fight under the banner of the Cross. On, then, with alacrity and confidence, and carry to a glorious issue the work so auspiciously begun."

At Cozumel, Cortés soon proved to his soldiers, that, while he disdained to follow in the steps of other cavaliers, so also did he reject many of their practices. One of his captains, arriving at the island first, displayed the red hand to the natives, drove them from their homes, and despoiled their temples. Cortés rebuked his follower, restored the spoils, and succeeded in recalling the Indians to their homes, and converting them, after the fashion of the time, to the faith of Christ. Their uncouth idols, tumbled from their teocallis, made way for the Virgin and the Child. Here, Cortés was fortunate in recovering a Spaniard who had been captured by the Indians in a previous expedition, who had acquired the Maya language, and was thus of great importance to the intercourse carried on with the natives of Yucatan. He had been eight years in captivity. Cortés proceeded from Cozumel, by water, to Campeachy, in the neighbourhood of which he

found one of his ships which had been missing. He then proceeded to the river Tabasco, which had been penetrated by Grijalva, one of his predecessors. This river he ascended with a considerable force in boats and brigantines, until he discovered a town, built of bricks, and surrounded by a wall of timber, through loopholes in which it could be defended by missiles. Failing, after entreaty, to procure the supplies of water and provisions which he required, and defied by the savages, he dispersed his troops in several divisions and succeeded in storming the place, which was gallantly defended. The savages fought with equal skill and bravery, and, singling out Cortés, who particularly distinguished himself in the conflict, they addressed themselves with special ferocity to his destruction. "Strike at the chief," was their cry—which drew upon him attentions equally honourable and dangerous. He lost his sandals in the struggle, and fought barefoot in the mud. A second battle followed in the plains of Ceutla. The Indians marshalled their legions,—legions indeed,—stretching out in dusk array to the very edge of the horizon. The fight which followed was a terrible one, but, in the most trying moment of the encounter, the eye of faith, among the more superstitious Spaniards, discovered a sacred ally from heaven fighting in their ranks,—no other than the blessed St. James, the patron saint of Spain,—who, mounted on a grey horse, conducted, to the shame of all other captains, to the final overthrow of the infidel. As far as we can see, Cortés himself wrought as effectually to this consummation, as the blessed saint whose business it does not seem to have been. He contented himself with victory, and forbore unnecessary slaughter. His mercy had its effect, not less than his valour. The savages felt their inferiority to the strange invader. Their chiefs sent in their submission, and appeared with the usual tribute of gold, slaves, and garments of feathers and cotton. Among the female slaves thus tendered, was one, the possession of whom, by the Spaniards, was soon ascribed to the particular interposition of heaven. She proved to be a native Mexican, taken by the Yucatanese when young, who still preserved her own language, and was capable of translating for the conqueror, where his recovered Spaniard failed,—namely, when they came in contact with those who spoke the Aztec dialect. She was baptized

at Tabasco, and took the name of Marina. The Spaniards afterwards called her Doña Marina, and the Mexicans Malinche. We are compelled to state, moreover, that she soon attained a closer personal relationship to the captain-general than good morals will justify. The amorous nature of our hero was not more subdued by trade and agriculture than his military ambition. Marina was beautiful and attractive of person. Her temper is described as generous and gentle. She was equally faithful to the chief and useful to the expedition. She had a quick mind, and soon acquired the Castilian. Love may have helped greatly to facilitate the study of the language. The Spaniards held her name in high veneration. She bore a son to Cortés, of whom the historian remarks, that he was "less distinguished by his birth than his unmerited persecutions."

From the conquered people of Tabasco, Cortés received his first intimations of that great empire which he was destined to conquer. His yearning spirit suffered no delay. A day of solemn festivity was spent among the conquered savages, to whom he gave the rites of the Catholic faith. The breeze favoured, and, re-embarking, he held his way along the coast until he reached the island of San Juan de Ulloa; and here the Aztec dialect succeeded to that of the Mayan, and Doña Marina as interpreter to Aguilar. Here, something more was learned of Mexico, and of Montezuma, its potent sovereign. Cortés was pleased with the country, and landed on the very spot which is occupied by the modern city of Vera Cruz. At this place he founded a settlement and opened an intercourse with the natives. To the chief of these he declared his purpose of meeting their monarch,—a resolution which provoked the scorn of the savage who had no notion that the world could contain a prince so powerful as his own. Of the Aztec civilization at this period, Mr. Prescott has given us an elaborate and interesting picture, to which we commend the reader. It would too greatly expand our article, were we to attempt to say any thing on this subject, or on the kindred topic which involves the history of those wondrous ruins of civilization which make conspicuous and curious the whole face of the adjoining country. Enough for us that Mexico was, in one sense, the mistress of the neighbouring nations. Montezuma was a sovereign

of considerable ability and acknowledged bravery. But his reign was troubled. Cortés arrived at a happy juncture. The internal condition of Mexico was not one of repose. The elements of discord were at work. She was surrounded by enemies, who hated as they feared her power; and discontents within the kingdom were the natural consequence of a condition of unexampled prosperity,—of an iron-browed despotism, and of nobles, haughty and aspiring, who possessed equal motives and facilities for revolt. The success of the Spaniards was necessarily facilitated by these influences, and the superstitions of the Mexican monarch were of a kind particularly to favour the progress of the invader. Venerable predictions taught him to fear the presence of a white and bearded people, and numerous omens occurring at the period of their arrival on the coast, quickened the apprehensions of a monarch, whose nature seems to have been morbidly alive to such influences. How he strove,—by what arts, falsehoods and open violence,—to retard the approach of the Spaniards to his capital, must be sought in the elaborate histories before us. But the resolution of Cortés was no less fixed in the attainment of that object. He pressed forward with a will as absolute as that of death, and the Aztec monarch, beholding in him the very fate that he feared, ceased, of a sudden, to exercise those qualities of courage, prudence and decision by which he had made himself feared of other foes, and by which the present might have been baffled. We see him yielding, hour by hour, and step by step, to the progress of a power, the very glance of which seems to have paralyzed all his own, as that of the serpent is said to paralyze the faculties of the trembling song-bird upon whom he fastens the fascinating terrors of his eye. Great were the mistakes which he made in his futile endeavours to arrest the approach of the Spaniards. The very presents by which he revealed the wealth of his kingdom, furnished an irresistible impulse to the object which they were meant to divert and to dissuade. His expressed wish that the invaders should not advance, betrayed his terrors; and his terrors, seen not less by the surrounding natives than by the Spaniards, while they encouraged the revolt of the one, stimulated the audacity of the other. The reader has a sufficient idea of the splendour of the presents sent

by Montezuma to Cortés, the survey of which did not lessen the resolution of the latter to see the other in person, and express his acknowledgments. Other gifts followed, with a renewal of the refusal of the Aztec monarch to suffer the Spaniards to penetrate his empire. But the very terms of the refusal betrayed his timidity, and it was unavailing with the invader. As well might the puny fawn in the jaws of the carcajou, deny that he should finish the repast the flavour of which is already on his palate.

While Cortés hesitated to advance, rather in consequence of some discontents among his troops than because of any doubts or apprehensions of his own, he became aware, by certain ambassadors from the Totonacs, of the domestic relation of Mexico with the surrounding nations. Taught that the conquered and ill-used people who had been brought by force of arms beneath the rule of Montezuma, were prepared to avail themselves of the first opportunity for throwing off the yoke, he at once grasped the grand idea of using them against their conquerors, of fighting the one people against the other, and thus economizing, for final issues, the strength and valour of his own. Ingeniously suppressing the discontents in his camp, occasioned by the fears of some, and, in part, by the machinations of certain friends of Velasquez, he founded a city to which was given the name of Villa Rica de Vera Cruz. A magistracy was set over it. To this magistracy he surrendered the powers obtained from the Governor of Cuba, and received from them, in return, in the name of the sovereign, a similar authority. The more violent of the friends of Velasquez were put in irons and sent on ship-board, where they soon learned to moderate their hostility, and join with their comrades in the common cause. It was no hollow peace. The wonderful address of Cortés secured their affections, and they were ever afterwards faithful to his fortunes.

We hurry over, as unnecessary to our narrative, the minor events which followed. He passed into the territories of the Totonacs, estimated to contain a hundred thousand warriors, with the Cacique of whom he formed an alliance, and from whom he obtained four hundred *tamanes*, or burden bearers. Passing from the city of Cempoalla to that of Chiahuitzla—both Totonac—he found frequent occasion to display his admirable judgment and

sagacious policy. In the latter city, an adroit movement committed this people to his cause, in such a manner as to make him very sure of their fidelity. At Cempoalla, as at Cozumel, he overturned the idolatrous and blood-smeared altars of the Indians, even though at the worst hazards of insurrection, and set up the gentler images of the virgin and child in their place. The savages seized their arms to prevent the indignity, but Cortés, with his wonted decision, having arrested the Cacique and principal inhabitants, subdued the tumult without bloodshed, and the fact that the divinities lately held so potent, did not avenge their own dishonour, tended, very naturally, to lose for them, in the eyes of their worshippers, the odour of their sanctity. It is to be remarked that, wherever he came, our hero seemed to have shown himself quite as solicitous for the diffusion of the true faith, as for the extension of his own conquests; and he sometimes pursued this object, at risks which, as a mere leader of armies, he would never have incurred.

His "City of the True Cross" fairly built, or rather begun, he prepared for his great movement. Despatches were sent to Spain containing his proceedings. His first letter is not now to be found. But Cortés wrote well, in a frank and direct manner, with a good natural style, forcibly, fluently, and sometimes with eloquence. With this letter he sent the treasures which he had obtained, the rare stuffs, sundry Mexican manuscripts, specimens of their picture writing, and four Indians, who had been rescued from cages where they had been kept for sacrifice to the bloody divinities of Aztec worship. Thus assuring himself, as well as he might, that the record of his discoveries, so far, was rendered safe, he proceeded to the performance of one of those daring acts by which the character of the man is at once stamped, with the signet of greatness, for the wonder of his age. He destroyed his shipping, and thus deprived himself and followers of all means of escape. There was now no possibility of retreating from the work. Triumph now was necessary to safety—the conquest of Mexico to life itself. Not to advance would be to revive the courage of Montezuma, to impair that of his allies, and to bring upon his little colony the united forces of both, by which he must be overwhelmed or driven into the sea. Terrible was the con-

sternation, and wild the rage of his followers, when the ships were sunk. But one small vessel remained. Their mutinous arms were lifted against him—he had led them, they cried, to the shambles—to butchery! But he quieted them, even as the waters subside from storm, after a breath from heaven passes over them. But one small vessel was suffered to remain, and this he yielded to the irresolute who were willing to depart. "As for me," said he, "my part is chosen. I remain here while there is one to bear me company. For those who shrink from the dangers of our glorious enterprise, let them go in God's name. Let them take the one vessel and depart for Cuba. There, they can relate where they left their commander and their comrades." "To Mexico!" was the unanimous answer to this speech. The proper chords were touched. The enthusiasm of the soldiery responded to their chief, and all their confidence in his skill and in his star at once revived in their bosoms. The destruction of his fleet was an act, not only of wondrous courage, but of admirable forethought. The fortunes of all were now staked upon the same cast, and a death-blow was given to the faction of Velasquez. In the absence of all means of escape, the inferior mind at once turned in hopeless dependence upon the master spirit of the company.

On the 16th of August, 1519, Cortés commenced his march for Mexico. His force amounted to four hundred foot, and fifteen horse. Thirteen hundred Totonac warriors and a thousand *tamanes*, accompanied the expedition. The latter were employed to transport the cannon, seven in number, and the baggage of the army. Forty of the chief citizens attended his march as guides and counsellors, not to say hostages. The garrison at Vera Cruz, was left in charge of Juan de Escalante, an officer at once prudent and skilful, and warmly attached to his commander. The advance of Cortés was marked by great vigilance. He was always guarded against surprise. His maxim, to his soldiers, was, "We are few against many, my comrades—be prepared, then, not as if you are going into battle, but as if actually in the midst of it." His course was first for Xalapa, a city which has given its name to a valuable medicine—thence for the martial republic of Tlascala—a people who still preserved their independence in

the face of continual conflict with the greater power of Mexico. To this people Cortés sent despatches. They were important to his enterprise. His object was to use them against their neighbours, to employ their understood hate of the Mexicans as a means of his own progress. The Senate of Tlascala was divided in its opinion as to the reception to be given to the Spaniards. A party was favourable to their application, but another opposed it; and it was first determined to try the strength of the Spaniards before making any concessions. Twice, thrice did the brave savages meet him, without any decisive results. The Tlascalans were beaten on all occasions, but they were still unsatisfied. Thousands fell, but they always left the field in good order, ready to resume the struggle next day. On the 5th September, 1519, a terrible battle was fought, giving the Spaniards a conclusive victory. But the conflict had been marked with such vicissitudes, as more than once moved the invaders to despair. Numbers nearly reconciled the inequality of weapons. Masses almost succeeded in overpowering individual prowess. Faction in the Tlascalan ranks helped the Spaniards; and the failure of a last hope and effort, in which, according to the advice of their priesthood, they had substituted cunning and artifice for arms, subdued their hostility. They became firm allies and fast friends of the Spaniards, and one of the greatest obstacles to the great conquest was finally overcome.

But the followers of Cortés began to despond. If they had met such enemies in the people of Tlascala, what might they not fear in the Mexican. Our hero had his answer to their fears, and it was again successful. He showed them that their only hope was in progress. They must go forward to find safety. Flight and fear would only bring upon them Mexican, Tlascalan, Totonac, the numerous herds of foes which covered the face of the country, all united, and all against the common enemy.

Their successes against Tlascala, that formidable foe whom he himself had never been able to conquer, increased the apprehensions of Montezuma. He saw, in Cortés, the creature of destiny—his own fate—appointed to realize all the vague terrors of the old tradition. Feeble and trembling still, he despatched new embassies and other presents to the advancing chieftain—congratulated

him upon his victories—and concluded, as before, by regretting that it was not possible to receive him in his capital. But Cortés was just the man to overcome the impossible. What was not possible for Montezuma was easy for him. He said as much in his reply—and the devoted Mexican now saw that his fate was unrelenting. The issue was no longer to be avoided, and he strove to make a merit of the necessity. Another Aztec embassy soon followed the preceding. It spoke a different language. The sovereign now declared his wish to see the strangers, and his ambassadors were instructed to conduct them to the capital. His policy, still insincere and vascillating, was yet rendered somewhat bolder from his necessities. Other suggestions had spoken to his fears. His purpose now, in urging their coming, was twofold—not only to get the Spaniards more completely into his power, but to prevent them from forming any alliance with his Tlascalan enemies. He was too late for the latter object. In prosecuting the former, he suggested their route by the city of Cholula, and there made his arrangements for their destruction. The Tlascalans exhorted Cortés against compliance with this suggestion. But his will was stronger than their fears. He was quite as much the creature of his destiny as Montezuma. He must go onward by that very route, by Cholula, and it was at the peril of the Aztec monarch if he played him false. It proved so.

Cholula was the sacred city of the Mexicans as Mecca is of the Mohamedans. It was under the particular protection of Quetzalcoatl, their god of air, whose mystic attributes embodied unexampled powers. There was a superstitious hope, entertained by the Aztec monarch, that this deity would contribute to free him from the man of destiny whose iron hand was lifted over his empire. His altars were raised upon the loftiest mound of the place, and thousands of human victims annually bled upon his shrines. The city, embosomed among volcanic mountains, lifted four hundred sacred towers in their emulation. The population was one hundred and fifty thousand. These were warlike, inured to arms, fierce and fanatic. To these, add thousands more, trained soldiers, concealed within and without the city, sent by Montezuma to make sure the cruel purpose of his mind. Yet, into this city, thus provided for his reception, thus strenghtened

within and without, hating and fearing him, and sworn vassals to the will of their sovereign, the resolute conqueror threw himself, with his little band of Spaniards. Six thousand Tlascalans attended him, whom, however, as their presence seemed to offend the Cholulans, he left without the walls.

The reception was glorious and without a cloud. Admirably could these cunning enemies disguise their hate. Their faces were wreathed in smiles. They covered the Spaniards with garlands, even as the lamb is dressed for the slaughter. The Spaniards were no lambs, true, but they were welcomed as victims, and conducted, as in a sort of triumphal procession, with every show of ostentatious honour and affection, to their appointed quarters.

But a few days changed the aspect of affairs, and the deportment of the Cholulans. They were now ready for the destruction of the strangers. Their plans were ripe for execution. The city was filled with armed men. The streets were barricaded, stones were carried to the house tops, missiles accumulated, and vast cavities dug in the thoroughfares and planted with upright and pointed stakes, the better to defeat the movement of the cavalry. To crown and complete all, a great sacrifice of children was made to propitiate the favour of their cruel gods!

The star of Cortés prevailed! His own suspicions excited, were confirmed by tidings afforded by his mistress, who had wormed the secret from an indiscreet Cholulan woman. Great were his anxieties in consequence, but he was equal to the exigency. He dissembled with the Caciques, and got them into his power. His plans were laid with equal skill and secrecy, and the event was a massacre rather than a conflict. The Holy City was sacked, and in the flames of its ruined temples, and the blood of three thousand worshippers, the imbecility of their false deity was fully shown to the wretched conspirators. Cortés seems to have stayed the havoc the moment he conceived the safety of his people to be certain. He suffered no women to be slain, and prevailed upon his Tlascalan allies, who had joined him at the first sounds of danger, to liberate their captives. How far his conduct deserves reproach—in how much it may be justified by the necessity of the case—is not a question for us. The first step of

Cortés was the true offence. The attempt at conquest, not a crime in his day, is one in ours. Once within the walls of Cholula, as a guest, he had the most perfect right to anticipate the treachery of those who had sought only to make him the victim of his confidence.

The fall of Cholula carried a terrible fear to the heart of Montezuma. If he was in doubt before, he trembled now. Despondency took the place of fear in his soul, and the oracles of his gods, whose altars were made to smoke hourly with the blood of their human victims, yielded no encouraging response. Another embassy to the Spaniards disavowed any share in the conspiracy of the Cholulans. Cortés, meanwhile, was acquiring newer strength. Terrified by the vengeance inflicted on Cholula, other cities sent in their submission. To treat with these, to purify the *teocallis* of the conquered city, and establish Christian, upon the ruins of the pagan, churches, employed the conqueror a few weeks, and he then led his army on the route to Mexico.

What plains he passed,—what mountains he overcame,—what toils he suffered,—what snares he escaped,—these must be read in the more copious histories. Suffice it, they were such as might well have discouraged any ordinary valour,—might well have baffled a common genius, and set at nought every ambition less honoured with the favouring smiles of fortune. But the star of Cortés prevailed. His followers had learned, even as those of another mighty spirit of modern periods, to confide in his destiny. No fatigues made them weary,—no dangers appalled. Their hopes grew with their toils,—their courage with the difficulties in their progress. The very wonders by which their dangers were attended, seemed to expand their souls with sentiments of daring, which rendered progress itself something superior to triumph. At length, passing an angle of the sierra of Ahualco, they suddenly beheld the beautiful valley of Tenochtitlan unbosomed before their delighted eyes.

The sight compensated for all their toils. Never was prospect more beautiful. Woods, waters and cultivated plains—glowing, glorious cities, girdled by shadowy hills, gathered, in picturesque dependency, lovely in tint and hue, and exquisitely imposing in distinct and noble outline. Immense plains of forest stretched

away beneath their feet in a wondrous circle, spanning the slopes that led downward to the valley. Within this circle, another, of cultivated fields—maize and maguey, tracts of luscious fruits and realms of delicious flowers,—seemed alone sufficient to reward the human sense for all human privation. In the centre of this great basin lay the wondrous lakes and lakelets of Anahuac, their borders "studded with towns and hamlets, and in the midst —like some Indian empress, with her coronal of pearls,—the fair city of Mexico, with her white towers and pyramidal temples, reposing as it were upon the bosom of the waters."

We know, from the days of Cæsar, that, with a great genius, to come and see, is to secure the conquest. Cortés looked down upon the lovely realm before him, and his eagle eye at once marked it for his own. While he gazed upon his prey from the slopes of Ahualco, where was the sovereign of Tenochtitlan?—where was Montezuma?—with what thoughts, what last hopes, what final purposes? Sacrificing before his impotent deities elbow-deep in human blood,—summoning them in vain to his rescue,—and groaning over the approaching cloud, from whose awful bosom the thunders of fate were about to vomit ruin on his kingdom. Never did brave monarch more completely cower beneath the arm of that destiny to which he was yet most reluctant to submit. Cortés is at length in Mexico—within the palaces of her kings,—a sovereign over the very soul of her sovereign. "The gods have declared against us," said Montezuma mournfully, to those who counselled resistance; "the gods have declared against us,—we should only fight in vain." In the advent of superior divinities, the savage deities might well be silent. Milton embodies the idea very nobly, in his hymn on the Nativity:

> "The oracles are dumb,
> No voice or hideous hum,
> Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving,
> Apollo from his shrine
> Can no more divine,
> With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving."

The genius of the Christian faith had as effectually cowed that of

the Aztec religion, as that of Cortés had overcome the spirit of their otherwise brave and despotic sovereign.

For the description of Mexico itself,—for the details of its wondrous magnificence,—the reader must be referred to the glowing narrative of Mr. Prescott. We can say as little of the modes of life,—the manners and customs of its people. As in a drama, we must confine ourselves to the action, the development of the leading characters, and the several prominent events which conduct to the catastrophe. Montezuma received his guests with a lofty hospitality. But he disguised the suffering, and, perhaps, the evil passions, at his heart. He was munificent, indulgent, conciliatory,—but these were only so many proofs of the awe which he entertained of these mysterious strangers, of whom ancient prophecy had taught him to apprehend so much. They had shown themselves heedless of his power; they were in his palaces, self-invited guests; and what he beheld of them in personal interview,—their strange and wondrous music, their horses, their artillery belching forth such thunders as shook the walls of his temples,—were all significant of attributes, with which, in all his wealth and magnificence, he felt it would be idle to contend. Unwilling to submit, yet not daring to defy, the unhappy monarch sunk, no less in his own, than in the sight of his people. The indiscretions of his troops precipitated events, and gave a colour to the more decisive proceedings of Cortés. An Aztec chief had ventured to murder two Spaniards near Vera Cruz, under circumstances of particular atrocity. This brought on a pitched battle between the Mexicans in that neighbourhood, and Juan de Escalante who had been left in charge of Vera Cruz. The former were defeated, and the prisoners referred the whole proceeding to the instigation of Montezuma himself. One of the Spaniards had been taken captive. His head, cut off, was sent to the Aztec emperor, no doubt as a decisive proof of the mortality of the invaders,—a matter about which the Indians were naturally doubtful. Cortés received this information very nearly as soon as Montezuma. He resolved on the boldest measures. His own safety required it. He was in the midst of powerful foes. He was in the palace of a subtle and deceitful prince,—one of great power and matchless cruelty. His followers were few.

There was no possibility of flight. It was equally impossible that he should remain long in Mexico, unperforming, a dependent on the doubtful fidelity of its monarch. Neither his genius nor his policy was prepared for this. His plan was soon conceived, but it was one to task all his courage and resolution. His design was to seize upon the person of Montezuma, and hold him as a hostage for the good conduct of his people. A day was appointed for this purpose. The night preceding, we are told by the historian, "he was heard pacing his apartment to and fro, like a man oppressed by thought, or agitated by strong emotion." He might well feel the struggle with himself. What might the morrow not bring forth, of tremendous struggle with his fate!

Mass was heard by Cortés and his soldiers in the morning. It was quite as well that the saints should be on their side. An audience was asked of Montezuma, and Cortés, with five chosen cavaliers, all in armour, appeared in the palace of the monarch. Small armed parties of the Spaniards, were also ordered to drop in, as if by accident, while the conference was in progress. When all seemed ripe for the development, the Spanish chieftain, changing his tone, abruptly accused the Aztec monarch with his treachery. Cortés required that the cacique, with his accomplices, by whom the Spaniards were murdered, should be brought to justice. The king consented, and the messenger was despatched with the royal signet. The next demand of Cortés, that Montezuma should take up his abode in his quarters, found less ready compliance. "When was it ever heard that a great prince, like myself, voluntarily left his own palace to become a prisoner in the hands of strangers." Cortés assured him it was but a change of residence, not imprisonment. "If I should consent to such a degradation," replied the monarch, "my subjects never would." He offered his sons and daughters as hostages, but the Spaniards were inflexible. The conference lasted two hours. Vexed at the fruitless discussion, an impatient cavalier, Velasquez de Leon, cried out,—"Why waste more words on the barbarian. If he resists us, we have but to plunge our swords through his body." The unhappy monarch submitted. His hour was come. The hand of destiny was upon his forehead. He left the palace with his conqueror, drooping in behaviour, deject-

ed and downcast in visage,—a sovereign in name only, and fully conscious of the cruel dishonour which his cowed spirit left him no power to resent. His people would have rushed to arms for his rescue, but the pusillanimous monarch quieted the tumult which his more noble ancestors would have directed. The proceeding of Cortés is justified on the score of policy,—but he was guilty, subsequently, of one seeming inhumanity, the justification of which may be as complete in this case as in the other, but which has not come down to us. When the criminal cacique by whom the Spaniards had been murdered, was brought to execution, fetters were put upon the wrists of the captive sovereign. This indignity completed the terribly humbling lesson which he had undergone. He wept unmanly tears which were only less unbecoming than the gratitude he expressed—the undignified joy—when the fetters were at length removed by his conqueror.

But the indignity to which Montezuma submitted, aroused a different feeling among his people. His caciques and lords were a high spirited and valiant race. They looked on the Spaniards with detestation, and longed to resent the shame which they had brought upon the kingdom. Their first movements to insurrection were promptly suppressed by Cortés, aided by Montezuma himself. Several chiefs were placed in confinement, and the threatened commotions happily subdued. Meanwhile, the Spaniards had covered the lakes of Mexico with their vessels, were in the receipt of the public revenues, and Montezuma had sworn fealty to the crown of Spain. But one thing yet remained to be done, which the wild and inconsistent fanaticism of the Spaniards conceived to be absolutely essential to the completion of a conquest undertaken in the name of God. This was the overthrow of the Aztec worship, and the substitution for it of that of Jesus. It was in vain that Montezuma pleaded against the innovation,—urging the strongest arguments of policy against it. Cortés was unyielding, and one of the *teocallis* was purified and converted into a Christian temple. The discontents of the Aztecs increased, and Montezuma formally announced to Cortés the necessity for his departure. An insurrection was preparing which he could not control,—in which the whole spirit of the people, wrought upon at once by patriotism and the priesthood, was about to declare

itself by a final resort to arms. There was no repose for the invaders. Their conquest was insecure. By day they grasped, by night they slept upon, their weapons!

While such was the relation of Cortés to the Mexicans, he was troubled with other tidings from his own countrymen. His emissaries, sent to Spain, had not been successful in procuring a sanction for his proceedings; and Velasquez, Governor of Cuba, furious at his exclusion from enterprises which had already borne such famous fruits, fitted out a new expedition, the command of which was entrusted to a brave but rash cavalier, named Pànfilo de Narvaez. This person was to supersede Cortés, to deprive him of his command, and proceed against him as a rebel. But Narvaez, lax in discipline, shallow in judgment and arrogantly confident of himself, was not the man to cope with Cortés. Yet he was provided with an overwhelming force; his squadron consisted of eighteen vessels, carried a thousand Spaniards, and as many Indians: eighty of the former were cavalry, eighty arquebusiers, and one hundred and fifty cross-bowmen. The expedition was amply supplied with heavy guns, military stores and ammunition. It was one of the bravest armaments that had ever ridden in the Indian seas.

Cortés was seasonably apprized of his dangers. His people were true to him, and he had friends, or soon made them, among the followers of Narvaez. Conscious that he risked all that had been gained in leaving Mexico, he was yet equally aware of the necessity of meeting his new enemy. His precautions and preparations for all events, the details of which must be sought in the history, were all singularly admirable and effective. Under Alvarado, one of his best captains, he left one hundred and forty men in the capital—two-thirds of his whole force. With these he left his artillery, and the greater part of his horse and arquebusiers. He took with him but seventy soldiers, but they were picked men,—veterans, whose sterling mettle had been tried in a thousand dangers. Six months after his entry into Mexico, about the Middle of May, 1520, he went forth, the master of an Indian empire, to save it from the rapacious hands of his own countrymen. His march was rapid. In celerity lay his safety. On his way he was joined by Sandoval, another of his captains, with

a body of soldiers from the garrison of Vera Cruz, and several deserters from Narvaez. His force was now increased to two hundred and sixty-six men. Frequent embassies had passed between himself and his enemy. The latter was reported to be puffed up with conceit, and unpopular with his soldiers. Cortés declared himself willing to submit, if he could produce a royal commission. But that of Velasquez, he was not prepared to recognize. The parties could not be reconciled. Arrived at the *Rio de Canoas*, Cortés was but a league distant from the camp of Narvaez, which was at Cempoalla. The river was swollen by recent rains. The storm had not spent its fury. He paused for a while, and suffered his men to rest till night. Then, he resumed his march, and, crossing the river with difficulty, in the very highest of the tempest, he penetrated the camp of his unconscious foe. No sound was made, no drum beaten, no trumpet sounded, until each division of his little force had reached the point assigned it. Then came the storm of men and weapons with that of the elements. Stupified by sleep, blinded by the tempest, uncertain where to go, or who to strike, the soldiers of Narvaez rose from their repose only to be overcome. The fight was not of long duration. Narvaez was struck down by the thrust of a spear which deprived him of an eye, and his cry of pain and terror was followed by the triumphant shout of Cortés, which announced the easy victory. The proud Narvaez, in chains, suffering from the mortification of defeat and wounds, said to Cortés when they met,—"You have great reason to thank fortune for having given you the day so easily, and put me in your power." "I have much to be thankful for," said Cortés in reply, "but, for my victory over you, I esteem it as one of the least of my achievements since my coming into this country." The truth embodied in the repartee, gave peculiar force to its sting. The affair, notwithstanding the modest pride in the answer of Cortés, was a most brilliant piece of generalship.

The conquered troops became his own, and in good season. Mexico was in revolt. The Spaniards were assaulted in their quarters,—the brigantines burnt upon the lakes,—several of the garrison were killed, and many wounded. The work of conquest was to be begun anew. The forces of Cortés, on reaching Tlas-

cala, were a thousand foot and one hundred horse. He obtained two thousand soldiers from the Tlascalans. With these he advanced upon Mexico. His garrison there was closely besieged. His presence relieved it. Mexico was re-entered by the Spanish chieftain, without fighting, on the 24th June, 1520. The rashness, if not the cupidity, of Alvarado, had occasioned the outbreak. But the Aztecs were ripe for it before. A massacre of the people took place, by the Spaniards, at one of their public festivals, in which many of their nobility were slain. Alvarado excused himself by alleging that he had proofs that this festival was to be made an occasion for insurrection. He had simply anticipated their purpose. In all probability there were mixed motives at work, producing the event. Cupidity on the one hand, provocation on the other, and the natural jealousy of two rival races, so closely in contact, yet entertaining such sentiments of mutual distrust and hate. The judgment of Cortés upon Alvarado, may be recognized as just. "You have done badly," said he, after he had heard his explanation. "You have been false to your trust. Your conduct has been that of a madman." Vexed with himself, and at the unhappy choice which he had made in the captain of his garrison, Cortés was betrayed into unusual impatience of manner and remark. The dangers were accumulating around him,—among them that of famine. The Mexicans no longer supplied their markets; and when he spoke angrily and contemptuously on the subject to the attendants of Montezuma, they disappeared only to make the matter worse. The next day the city was in rebellion,—the drawbridges were raised,—the great avenues leading to the capital were swarming with warriors,—the terraces and *azoteas*, or flat roofs, in the neighbourhood of the quarters of the Spaniards, covered with combatants, watchful of every opportunity to wing a shaft or missile. The whole immense population of the valley of Tenochtitlan, was in arms for the expulsion of the invader.

We cannot linger for details. The war was begun with all the energies of a vast military nation thoroughly excited,—a proud people, wounded to the quick in all their sensibilities,—pride of character, religious sentiment, reverence for their kings and for their deities,—affection and patriotism. Mexico alone contained

a population of three hundred thousand souls, and the cities by which she was encircled, though greatly inferior, were also greatly populous. They were all united for the common object. Generalship there was none. The masses swarmed around the Spanish quarters, and were mowed down in battalions by the musketry and cannon. It was the old contest of the naked man against the armed—the highest form of European civilization against the untaught savage. But numbers reconciled this inequality. Thousands perished, but the Mexicans were undismayed, and strove against death at the very muzzles of the blazing guns. The conflict only ended with the night. With dawn the battle was renewed, and ended with the day, to be resumed again with the morrow. The Spaniards were again victorious, but the Mexicans were not to be defeated. Cortés sallied forth with his horse, exhibited prodigious valour, committed immense havoc, and, with a chivalrous disregard of himself, encountered the greatest dangers in defending the meanest of his men, which endeared him the more deeply to their affections. He was severely wounded; but his reflections after the fight occasioned sufferings more severe. His eyes at once opened upon all his dangers. He felt how much his impatience had erred—how much he had mistaken the Aztec character; and he resolved to conciliate their monarch whom he had rather avoided since his return. When, therefore, the return of the ensuing day showed that the fight was to be renewed, Montezuma was required to interpose between the invaders and his subjects. He consented with reluctance, declaring his belief that the effort would be in vain—that the Mexicans would not give ear to his entreaties. Surrounded by a guard of Spaniards, and several Aztec nobles, clothed in the imperial robes, with a diadem upon his head, he ascended the central turret of the palace. As he advanced along the battlements, a change like that of magic, overspread the combatants. The strife ceased, the cries of battle were silenced, many prostrated themselves upon their faces before a monarch, once, and still, so much venerated. But when he spoke for peace, and for the strangers, a murmur ran through the multitude. Their furious passions were not to be restrained—overleapt all barriers, and the cries of scorn and bitterness which replied to his address, were

followed by a cloud of missiles. The Spanish guards interposed their bucklers, but too late. Three of the missiles took effect upon the monarch, and he fell to the ground from a stone, which struck him on the temple, and left him senseless. Shocked at their own passionate deed, the Mexicans dispersed in terror from the spot. The last scene in the destiny of Montezuma, followed soon. He died, rather of a broken heart, than of his injuries. These might have been cured but he refused help—tore away the bandages from his wounds, and declared his anxiety to die, as the only means of escaping from disgrace. He rejected the proffered rites of Christian salvation, saying—"I have but a few moments to live, and will not, at this hour, desert the faith of my fathers." He was the victim of a fate which a less superstitious mind must easily have baffled.

The hours that he yet lingered, after his injuries, were employed by the Spaniards in fighting. The panic of the Mexicans was of short duration. They had returned to the conflict. Opposite to the Spanish quarters, at the distance of a few rods only, there stood the great *teocalli* of an Aztec god. The mound, with the sanctuaries that crowned it, completely commanded the palace occupied by the Spaniards. This position was taken by a select body of Mexicans, five or six hundred in number, directed by many of their nobles, and warriors of the highest distinction. From this elevation they hurled their missiles upon the Christians, with equal certainty and profusion. It was necessary to dislodge them. Cortés assigned this duty to Escobar, with a hundred men. But he was thrice repulsed. It was necessary that he should himself undertake the enterprise. His left hand was badly wounded, but he fastened his buckler upon the arm and thus made it useful. We cannot narrate the particulars of the conflict which ensued. Enough that, fighting step by step, he gained the summit of the teocalli, one hundred and fifty feet in air. Here, in the sight of the whole city, Cortés and his comrades met in deadly and close combat with the best warriors of Mexico. The hostile parties forbore the struggle below, to gaze, terrified and anxious, upon that above. The area was large enough for the meeting of a thousand combatants. It was paved with broad flat stones. The edge of the area was without parapet or battlement.

"Quarter was neither asked nor given; and to fly was impossible. The least slip would be fatal; and the combatants, as they struggled in mortal agony, were sometimes seen to roll over the steep sides of the precipice together." Cortés himself narrowly escaped this dreadful fate. Two of the Aztec warriors had devoted themselves to his destruction. They were willing to perish for this object. They were men of great muscle and vigour, and, simultaneously seizing upon him, they dragged him towards the brink of the precipice. But Cortés was a man of wonderful strength and agility. The struggle was one of giants—of life and death. By an earnest concentration of all his vigour, at the happy moment, he succeeded in releasing himself from his assailants, one of whom he hurled, with his own arm, into the terrible abyss. The battle lasted three hours. The teocalli remained in the hands of the Spaniards. The gods and shrines of the Aztecs were delivered to the flames in their fight. But they were unsubdued, unshaken, and a new day only opened upon newer conflicts. We cannot pursue these issues, the result of which was that Cortés must abandon his conquest for the time. But if ever mortal genius warred valiantly against necessity, it was his. There is a point beyond which human strength may not prevail, and this only did the Spanish General forbear. Mind and body strove, equally strong, against the iron fate which impelled his departure, and it was with the composure of a mighty spirit that he at length resigned himself to a necessity which he was no longer able to avert. Compelled to fly from Mexico, every precaution was taken to render flight successful, and, on the night of the first of July, 1520, the gates of the Spanish quarters were silently thrown open, and the Christian army set forth amid clouds and rain, only too happy if, in the gloom which covered earth and sky, they should escape the keen eyes of their vigilant enemies. But they were not fortunate in this hope. Their flight was discovered, and the huge drum in the temple of the Aztec war god, announced to the exulting Mexicans the departure of the hated strangers. Rising at the signal, the masses poured forth from street, and house, and citadel—from lake and suburb, like a forest of hungry wolves, infuriate in winter for their prey. The horrors of that night, to this day known in Spanish chronicle as

"the melancholy night"—*Noche Triste*—who shall describe? We are reminded but of one parallel to its terrors in the wide pages of modern history—the passage of the Beresina—the flight from Moscow! The details alone, copious, peculiar, full of wondrous struggles of man for life, man against his deadly enemy, man maddened by desperate fear and by a hate as desperate—would suffice for its proper comprehension. We shall attempt no particulars. The history, itself, will but imperfectly describe the dreadful character of that night-long conflict, ended not with dawn, and arrested only by the sheer exhaustion of the Aztecs. Freed, at length, from the press of enemies, Cortés could look about him and comprehend the full extent of his disaster. He wept at the survey, but his tears were those of manhood, that weeps only the irreparable. His soul was still unyielding. His depression never impaired the hope that looked forward to the raising of the curtain which kept the wondrous drama from its glorious dénouëment. Already he meditated the means for the re-conquest of the great city which he had been just compelled to abandon. And yet his present escape was still doubtful. The Mexicans, in small bodies, hung upon his steps, assailed his flanks, and vaunted his destruction as an approaching event. "Go on," they cried, "go on! You go to your doom." Their meaning was soon read as the weary Spaniards reached the heights that looked down on the valley of Otumba. The whole force of Mexico awaited him in this spot. Far as the eye could reach were to be seen the white garments, the waving banners, the shining helmets and shaking spears, of the Aztec chivalry. They had gathered, in confident hope, as the eagles to their prey. Perilous, indeed, was the prospect for the weary and dispirited Christians. But Cortés addressed himself to the danger, with all the manhood of his most hopeful hours. A few words to his followers, and a short prayer to God—commending himself and people to His protection and the care of the Virgin—and the fearless captain led his small battalions into the very heart of the enemy's array. The day went against him. Slaying was not conquering. Where hundreds of the Aztecs fell, thousands rushed to fill the ranks. The Spaniards were engulphed by the myriads with whom they fought. Most of them were wounded—Cortés, him-

self, twice, and upon the head. His horse, wounded also, was abandoned for another. The field seemed no longer doubtful. The event was almost decided against him, when the keen eye of the Christian chief distinguished, by the peculiarity of his decorations, the commander of the Aztec forces. A body of young warriors—the flower of the Indian nobles—guarded his person and the sacred emblem of Aztec sovereignty which he bore. The value of this badge was known to our hero. A single glance sufficed, and the instant mind of Cortés conceived the mode of extrication. Turning quickly to a select number of his cavaliers, he exclaimed—"There is our mark! Follow me!" His war cry rose again above the clamour, and, striking his iron heel into his steed, he plunged into the thickest array, solicitous only of the one object. He attained it! The ferocity of his attack was successful. His lance struck the Mexican commander to the ground, and, in the loss of their sacred banner, the Mexicans lost the victory. All was panic in their ranks. They fled in the blindest terror, and, wondering at their own unlooked for successes, the Spaniards remained to reap the rich spoils with the glory of the field. They reached the friendly city of Tlascala without farther annoyance.

Of the subsequent jealousies of the Tlascalans, of the discontents among the Spaniards, it needs not that we should say more than that the genius and the star of Cortés, succeeded in soothing the one and subduing the other. He himself was prostrated on a bed of sickness, and the events around him, and the tidings from abroad, seemed to work adversely to his fortunes. But, let not the brave mind tremble in adversity. Great men are strengthened by trials, as muscle is made by toil. It is the pressure upon the soul that makes it speak and work, and bound and glow, in the consciousness of the resources that might else rest in inglorious repose within. The mind of Cortés rose above its difficulties. His good star was not to be baffled. "Fortune," says he, in a letter to Charles the Fifth, "favours the brave. The Spaniards are the followers of the cross. Trusting in the mercy of God, I cannot believe that He will suffer them and His own good cause to perish among them. I am resolved not to descend to the coast, but, at all hazards, to retrace my steps, and once more

beard the foe in his capital." How admirably does ambition deceive itself with the words of piety. If Cortés was not a Christian, he certainly believed that he was doing the work of one. And who shall say that he was not? Who shall say that a less determined warrior, a less sanguinary people, could have succeeded in the overthrow of those bloody superstitions which daily immolated thousands of God-made men, on the shrines of the horrid Moloch of Aztec superstition!

We pass over subordinate events, including his conquest over certain of the Aztec allies and tributaries, in which his followers regained their former confidence in the superiority of their arms. The details are replete with proofs of the wonderful sagacity and resource of their leader. It is not the least remarkable feature in the history of a great conqueror, that the tribes which submit to his arms, are always made faithful by his moderation and justice. His men were recovered from their wounds. They had regained their courage. Fortune had brought unlooked for reinforcements to their strength, and, confident of support from the Tlascalan and other neighbouring people, and taught by experience in what manner to avoid former errors, Cortés prepared to resume his design against Mexico. But the boldest conception of purpose, as essential to his object, was that of framing vessels at Tlascala, to be taken in pieces, on the shoulders of the *tamanes*, to the lakes of Mexico. A fleet was to be borne on the shoulders of naked men, across forest and mountain, for a distance of sixty miles, before it could be launched upon its destined waters. The conception was worthy of the genius of a great captain. It is not surpassed in history. Yet, what a proof of the prescience of Cortés, that he should, when commanding the destruction of the fleet at Vera Cruz, have insisted upon the preservation of the iron, the bolts, the sails and cordage. Without this fleet, he could not have succeeded against the capital. While his workmen were busy in its preparation, he commenced his march. His force of Spaniards fell little short of six hundred men. He had been fortunate in adding to his strength by the acquisition of more than one small body of adventurers, who, cast upon the shores at Vera Cruz, readily agreed to follow his superior fortunes. Forty of his men were horse, eighty arquebusiers and crossbow men—the

rest were armed with sword and target, and with a long copper-headed pike which Cortés had borrowed from the people of Chinantla. He had nine pieces of cannon, but his supply of powder was small. To this force was added a multitude of native warriors, from Tlascala, Cholula, Tepeaca, and other territories. Before setting out on his expedition, he published a code of ordinances for his army which remarkably display his character. These insist upon order as the great law, equally divine and human—upon the conversion of the heathen as the great object of the expedition —prohibit blasphemy and gambling, brawls, and private combats, with other laws of a like nature equally calculated to promote discipline, general propriety, temperance and honesty, and to elevate the character of the common soldiery. The ordinances, we may add, were enforced with undeviating severity. The march took place in December. It was tedious and painful, rather than dangerous. Clouds of dusky warriors hung upon his footsteps, but afforded no serious obstacle. His cavalry brushed them from his path in a few resolute charges. The policy of the Mexicans does not seem to have designed meeting their powerful enemies in open field. Their present sovereign was Guatemozin, a nephew to the last monarch, but very much his superior. His superstitions did not maim his courage. He was young, not more than twenty-five, "elegant," says Bernal Diaz, "in his person, for an Indian, valiant, and so terrible, that his followers trembled in his presence." He had considerable military genius, great sagacity, and if any Aztec could have retrieved the fortunes of his country, and remedied the disasters of the preceding reign, he was the man. He had distinguished himself in battle, and, hating the Spaniards with the sort of religious hate which Hannibal is said to have had against Rome, he accepted the sovereignty of his country at a time when its perilous honours might well have discouraged the ambition of any common spirit. He was not unworthy to oppose the genius and the arms of Cortés.

On the 31st December, 1520, the Spaniards once more entered the venerable city of Tezcuco, once the rival capital to Mexico, eminent upon one of the lakes which occupy the basin of Tenochtitlan. The place was comparatively deserted. Its lord had fled, and Cortés elevated another to the throne. His next move-

ment was upon the city of Iztapalapan, which he took after a desperate resistance. But the fierce resolve of the savages almost converted his victory into a defeat. While the soldiers were engaged in the sack and destruction of the city, the Aztecs had broken down the mole which fenced out the waters of Lake Tezcuco. The country was laid under water, and the Spaniards, loaded with booty, and struggling waist deep in the lake, were assailed by their enemies, who, swarming the basin with their canoes, assailed them with deadly missiles. Their escape was difficult, and their Indian allies suffered prodigious loss. It was evident to Cortés, not only that the Aztecs were counselled by captains of great character and spirit, but that they had come into the field with that self-sacrificing spirit of patriotism from which it is scarcely possible to expect too much. It was equally necessary that he should be wary as well as brave.

The fate of Iztapalapan helped his progress. It struck terror to the hearts of the other cities, and gained him allies among the contiguous tribes. Other battles followed, and the town of Chalco was added to his conquests. The war had no respite, and the progress of the Spaniards was continual. Every day gave them new victories and new allies. The policy of Cortés conciliated friends quite as rapidly as his arms overthrew enemies. He extinguished the hereditary feuds of ages, and united tribes in a common object, which had been at variance a thousand years. In the full tide of his successes, he sent an embassy of captive nobles to Mexico, proposing favourable terms for its surrender,—proposing the confirmation of Guatemozin in his authority, if the city would return to its allegiance. To this the brave Aztec deigned no answer. His determination was made to defend the empire to the last.

With the arrival of the brigantines from Tlascala, Cortés prepared to prosecute the conquest. There were thirteen vessels of different sizes. They were yet to be put together, rigged, equipped and made ready for service. A canal was to be dug for the purpose,—a work of immense labour ; and, while thousands of the allies, and a select body of Spaniards, were assigned these duties at Tezcuco, Cortés resolved on reconnoitering the capital. Early in the spring, he left Tezcuco, with three hundred and fifty Span-

iards, and the main strength of his allies. He had advanced but a few leagues, when he was compelled to skirmish with a considerable body of Mexicans. These he drove before him. At the insular town of Xaltocan, a fierce battle took place, in which he was again successful. Other towns were abandoned at his approach,—the enemy hovering in dark masses in sight of his advance. After two fierce conflicts, he occupied the town of Tacuba, a portion of which was burnt by his wild allies. Every day, during his halt in this place, was employed in fighting with the unwearied Aztecs. In one of these combats, which almost uniformly terminated in favour of the Spaniards, the courage of Cortés had nearly led to his destruction. Heated with the ardour of pursuit, he followed the flying foe upon the great causeway which had once been so fatal to his army. He was led into an ambuscade. When far advanced, the Aztecs, strengthened by fresh troops, turned upon him, and swarms of boats suddenly covered the waters on either hand. A storm of missiles, from lake and causeway, rained upon the Spaniards. Nothing but their coolness and indomitable courage saved them in the retreat. Cortés received, in this affair, another intimation of the superior military conduct of the Aztec warriors. While at Tacuba, he made a second attempt at accommodation with the Indian emperor, but without avail. He was told by the chiefs that Mexico was not now governed by Montezuma! That city was now in a good state of defence. The havoc which had swept its streets was not apparent,—its injuries had been repaired, and the taunts of their warriors invited him once more to penetrate its dangerous passages. He needed no exhortation on this subject. But the time for his battle was not come, and, constantly busy in coercing the towns around, and controlling the avenues to the capital, he waited, with the patience of resolve, the launching of his brigantines. His deeds, meanwhile, were securing him all the results of fame. His name, and the reputation of his armies, had penetrated the whole country. Ambassadors from Indian States on the remotest shores of the Gulf of Mexico, tendered their allegiance, and sought his protection; and reinforcements of Spaniards—a more important acquisition—reached him from Vera Cruz. Cortés employed himself and men in a second reconnoitering expedition, marked by

constant conflicts with the savages, in most of which he was successful. These conflicts were no child's play. They were marked by indomitable courage on the part of the enemy, and dangers to the Spaniards which tasked all their own courage and the genius of their leader. But their march was onward, and conquest followed their footsteps. Cuernavaca, a mountain city, was taken, after great labour and a sanguinary conflict. A battle followed at Xochimilco, or "the field of flowers," in which Cortés made another narrow escape. In the thick of battle his horse lost footing and fell. Before he could rise, he received a severe blow on his head. It was with difficulty, assisted by a Tlascalan and two of his servants, that he could regain his feet, shake off his enemies, recover his saddle, and brandish his lance in the face of his enemy. But for the desire of the Aztecs to make him prisoner, he could not have escaped. His life was in their hands. The result of the affair was, as usual, a victory to the Europeans.

This battle was followed by others. Guatemozin made strenuous efforts to recover Xochimilco from the conqueror. His policy was to send detachment after detachment against the Spaniards, so that, even though victorious, they might be wearied out by the war. But he gained nothing by this policy. The successive defeats only served to dispirit his warriors, and confirm them in their belief of Spanish invincibility. Not caring to continue this warfare, Cortés set fire to the captured city, and returned, though not without frequent fighting, to Tacuba, where he found the canal completed, and his brigantines rigged and equipped, and ready to descend upon the lake. But, before this event could take place, another, of less grateful character, was in progress. Cortés returned to Tacuba to discover conspiracy in his army. A dangerous design was set on foot, menacing his authority and life. It was headed by one Villafana, a common soldier. We need not ask his motives. They may be conjectured. The good star of Cortés prevailed for his safety. One of the conspirators, touched with compunction, betrayed the secret. Without losing a moment,—with that decision which marked his character,—Cortés, attended by a few of his favourite officers, proceeded at once to the quarters of Villafana. The criminal, confounded at the sudden apparition of his commander, and confused by his guilt,

endeavoured to swallow a paper which he snatched from his bosom. The prompt grasp of Cortés arrested the movement. Looking over the fatal list, it was with equal surprise and mortification that he read the names of several in whom he had every confidence. But his sagacious mind instantly comprehended the necessity of keeping this discovery to himself. He destroyed the scroll, and contented himself with the execution of the one ringleader. The conspirators trembled, but without cause. The magnanimous judgment of Cortés forbore farther inquiry. In an address to his troops he told them that the guilty man had made no confession. His admirable policy never once suffered them to suppose that he had any suspicion of the guilty parties; but his vigilant eye watched them nevertheless,—they were never permitted to see how closely.

At length, the curtain rose upon the last act in the great drama of the conquest. On the 28th of April, 1521, the brigantines were borne through the canal upon the lake. The event was marked by due solemnity. Mass was said, and the whole army received the sacrament; prayers were offered up, and a benediction invoked upon the little navy, the first ever launched by Europeans upon the waters of America. It was a proud moment for Cortés. It was the triumph of his peculiar genius,—the harbinger of its final triumph over fortune and Tenochtitlan. His forces numbered more than a thousand men. His material and appointments were superior to what they had ever been before. Three hundred of his men were assigned to the vessels, each of which carried a heavy piece of ordnance. His Indian confederates were summoned to the siege. Fifty thousand of these came from Tlascala. But, we hurry over the preparations,—over numerous events, highly interesting in themselves, but too much calculated to crowd our pages and distract the single interest which is our object. The first opposition which the Spaniards met from the Aztecs, was when they attempted to "cut off the pipes that conducted the water from the royal streams of Chapoltipec to feed the numerous tanks and fountains of the capital." The Aztecs knew the importance of this work, and fought desperately to save it, but the Spaniards prevailed. A part of the aqueduct was demolished, and water, from this source, no longer found its way to

the capital. The flotilla of Cortés, commanded by himself, was soon environed by clouds of canoes; but there was no fight. The frail vessels of the savages were overswept by the advancing brigantines, and such a slaughter followed, as to leave the Spaniards forever after in full possession of the Aztec Sea. This afforded them vast advantages in every conflict along the causeways leading to the capital. But the courage of the Indians seemed to increase with their disasters. The fighting was incessant, by night as well as day. The two principal avenues to Mexico were soon in the hands of the assailants. There yet remained a third, by which the besieged could still maintain their communications with the country, and effect their escape. This was finally taken possession of by the Christians, and, with these avenues in their power, and in full command of the lakes, the blockade of the capital was complete.

But Cortés was not the man to carry on the war by blockade merely. His warfare was active also. His vessels on the lake were made to co-operate with his troops upon the causeway, until, step by step, the Aztecs were driven from every position along the avenues. The breaches which they had left by tearing away the bridges, were filled up, and, securing a solid and secure passage for his horse and artillery, Cortés at length confined his opponents to the limits of the city, into which he penetrated, destroying the dwellings as he advanced, that they might give no shelter to his numerous enemies. In this way, the Spaniards reached the old quarters which they had held in the time of Montezuma. The Mexicans fled for refuge into the sacred enclosure of the *teocalli*. Here the priests, from the terraces, in their wild and bloody vestments, chanted to their gods, and shouted encouragement to their warriors. The Spaniards poured into the area, and a party, rushing up the winding steps of the *teocalli* to its summit, hurled the priests headlong down the sides of the pyramid, and stripped the horrid image of the Aztec war-god of its gorgeous decorations. This profanation aroused the fury of the Aztec warriors, and reinvigorated their courage. A dreadful fight ensued, in which their reckless desperation proved more than a match for Spanish discipline. A rout ensued. The voice of Cortés was no longer heeded by his men in the eagerness of their apprehensions. Noth-

ing saved them but the sudden appearance of a small body of cavalry, by which they were rescued. The horse and rider were still objects of terror to the Mexicans. Cortés beheld their hesitation, availed himself of the movement, and drove them back to the enclosure, while he ordered a retreat.

A second attack upon the capital soon followed, distinguished, like the former, by a struggle, step by step, in which the immense numbers and dogged valour of the foe, atoned for their inferior capacity for war. This time, however, in penetrating into the city as he had done before, Cortés resolved upon a measure by which the more completely to intimidate, and perhaps impress the superstitious feelings of the Aztecs. He fired the venerable abode of their monarchs,—the House of Birds,—and other fabrics equally dear to the eyes and imaginations of their people. The result was not what he expected. It made them desperate rather than desponding; and the task of extrication, that night, from their thronging myriads, was equally difficult as on the day before. Day by day, in the same manner, was the assault continued, and each day brought him nearer to his object.

Guatemozin, meanwhile, was doing all within the province of Indian warfare to save his empire. We cannot detail the process by which he contrived to relieve the labours and maintain the valour of his men. His conduct was conspicuous in all their efforts, and his adroitness enabled him even to capture one of the Spanish brigantines, and render another useless. The contest was waged at the same time on the lake, on the causeways and in the city. The Aztec monarch was true to himself and empire. But famine began to press upon his people. Deserted by their allies, hemmed round by hostile legions, unsuccessful in the fight and unable to escape, they yet betrayed no terrors. Their spirits were unbroken, even though pestilence began to show itself among them—the most terrible of all the allies of famine.

Cortés strove vainly to save them. He offered to spare their lives and city. He implored them, by means of captives whom he dismissed, to be merciful to themselves, and, by timely concession, to avoid their own and the destruction of their country. But they heard his proffers with scorn—they had no thought of submission.

Impatient of this obstinacy, the high-mettled cavaliers of the Spanish army urged their General to a *coup-de-main*. To this he was opposed. The time had not come. He allowed himself, however, to be overruled, and the result confirmed his opinions. The army entered to the assault in three divisions—one of which he led in person. The others were entrusted to brave, but hot-headed officers, who rushed head-long into a cunning snare laid for them by the Aztecs. The division led by Cortés, himself, was successful in its objects; but terrible was the result to the others. His whole efforts were now addressed to saving them from the destruction by which they were threatened. "I will die rather than desert my poor followers in extremity!" And narrow, indeed, was his escape in this magnanimous endeavour. He became a conspicuous mark for his enemies. "Malinche! Malinche!" was their cry, as they hurled their missiles and darts, their stones and arrows, at his person. Six of their most athletic warriors rushed upon him at the same instant, striving to drag him into their boats by which the causeway was environed. He was disabled by a severe wound in the leg, and, prostrate, was only saved by the desperate exertions of two devoted followers. These baffled the enemy for a moment, and gained time for the approach of the captain of his guard, who, with several others, succeeded in tearing him from the grasp of the enemy who were struggling with him in the water. He was once more raised upon the causeway. One of his pages, leading him a horse, was struck down with a javelin. Guzman, his chamberlain, seized the bridle, but as Cortés mounted, the faithful attendant was snatched away by the Aztecs, and dragged to their canoes. While the General lingered, unwilling to leave the spot, his bridle was seized by a faithful follower, who hurried him away from a conflict in which no skill or valour could well prevail against the immense numbers which opposed them. The danger was not even then over, nor the escape easy. Cortés, at length, regaining firm ground, rallied his broken squadrons under the fire of his artillery, and, charging at the head of a body of horse, which had not been in the action, beat off the infuriate enemy. Speaking comparatively, the Spaniards had suffered a terrible defeat. "It is for my sins," said Cortés, "that it has befallen me!" That night the war

drum in the great temple of the Mexicans was heard. It denoted some solemn ceremonial,—and as the Spaniards looked out they could behold a long procession, winding up the steps of the great pyramid—and could detect among the figures, the white skins of their brother Christians—captives taken in the dreadful conflict of the day—stripped to the waist, and decorated for the horrid sacrifice of the Aztec Moloch.

The Mexicans, elated by these events, gave themselves up to unmeasured exultation. The priests assured them that the wrath of their offended deities was appeased. They predicted that, before the end of eight days, all their enemies should be delivered into their hands. This prediction had an equal effect upon the Mexicans themselves, and upon the superstitious allies of the Spaniards. Company after company deserted. But a few faithful chiefs, with their followers, remained, and these were not wholly uninfluenced by the prediction. Cortés was firm under this defection. He treated the prophecy with scorn, and simply requested the retreating squadrons to halt upon the road until its falsehood should be shown by the lapse of the appointed time. The Spaniards themselves, encouraged by the constancy of their General, were undismayed. They yielded none of their resolution, relaxed in no degree the severity of the blockade, and still, with prompt carnage, of musketry and cannon, swept away the long files of the Aztecs at every fresh assault. The brigantines, still in possession of the lake, made effectual the *cordon* about the beleaguered city.

That great triumph of Guatemozin was his last. His priests had blundered in fixing the time of their prediction. Supplies of ammunition and military stores came from Vera Cruz. The war was to be resumed with new resolve. The determination of Cortés, now, was to advance no step without securing the safety of the army. Every breach in the causeway, every canal, was to be filled up as soon as it was gained. The buildings were to be pulled down for this purpose. Palace, temple, hut—all were to be demolished in his path. The cavalry and artillery must have room for exercise. This was a painful necessity which Cortés was slow to admit. He wished to spare the city, which he styles "the most beautiful thing in the world," but this desire

was inconsistent with its conquest. His losses and defeats had arisen only from this anxiety, which, springing from a moral emotion—the love of the beautiful—is one that should escape the censure, even of the mere man of policy. The war was renewed. The work of desolation advanced. The Mexicans struggled on, in spite of famine and other woes. Their provisions were exhausted. They lived on rats and reptiles, on the mucilaginous weeds and scum which floated upon the lake. Verily, their resolution was worthy of that ancient Spanish town, which, in the wars of Rome, opposed itself, through like perils and necessities, to the conquests of the great Scipio. One more effort was made by Cortés to subdue the resolution of Guatemozin. But in vain. The stubborn Prince forbade that any of his followers should hereafter, on pain of death, speak of surrender. The answer of the Mexicans, for which the Spaniards waited two days, was spoken with their weapons in a general sortie. Their strength was not equal to their fury. The attempt betrayed their impotence—they recoiled from the dreadful fire of artillery and musketry from causeway and brigantine, which received their columns—recoiled and shrunk back into the yet secure quarters of the capital, wearied and fainting with their futile endeavours.

These were not destined long to be secure. The work of demolition went forward. Cortés, with all the inflexibility of a destroying angel, steadily pursued his plan for making sure his footsteps. The citadel whence he drove the savages, was immediately cast down by his pioneers. Palace, and temple, and dwelling, shared the same fate. Daily, with this labour before them, the several divisions of the Spanish entered the departments of the city which were assigned them for destruction. Their progress was slow, but terribly certain. The very slowness of the operation, as it betrayed the patience of the invader, declared his unyielding determination. Vainly did the Aztecs rage from their high places where they yet lingered. Their lordly edifices were tumbled into the canals before their eyes. Dry land occupied the place of water. Ruin raised his mutilated front where stood the consecrated tower. There was fighting still, daily and continued struggles, but it was without effects, save where it helped on the invader. Weeks were consumed in these struggles

and these labours, and the Aztecs were as unyielding as the Spaniards. We should occupy too much space to attempt the description of even the most terrible of their conflicts. Devoted as they were to death, they might well fight to desperation. The ordinary means of subsistence had long since failed them. They gnawed the bark of trees, the roots of the earth—they drank brackish water from the lakes. Pestilence followed in the train of famine. They sickened and died in the highways, their bodies lying, unburied and putrifying, in court yard and canal. The famishing survivors looked like spectres, but without the power to affright. Their dwellings presented yet more appalling sights. While some were struggling in the agonies of death, others were festering in corruption. Women and children perishing of hunger, men mangled in battle, and crawling from sight, on the approach of the invader, as it were, in the very mockery of life. But, impotent as they were, and amidst all this suffering, the Aztecs breathed nothing of submission. They had imbibed the indomitable spirit of their monarch, and the people were as one man. The women shared their spirit, and standing by their feeble warriors in battle, prepared their slings, supplied their stones and arrows, and confronted all danger at their sides, with the constancy of a temper that already knew the worst.

At length, the invaders reached the market-place of Mexico, a vast inclosure covering many an acre. They had gained it after a dreadful struggle. They had passed the single canal which lay in their way. They had won the huge teocalli of the Aztec war god, and consigned its sanctuary to the flames. These successes were not of easy achievement. The defence of these shrines called forth all the spirit of superstition and patriotism. They fought as in the best days of their valour: but they fought against the fates. The genius of the invader mocked their struggles, as impotent against his fortune. They could only howl in piteous lamentations, as, baffling their skill and valour, and defying their deities, they beheld the conquerors firing the consecrated dwellings of gods to whom they had vainly given their faith and confidence.

The young Emperor of the Aztecs, meanwhile, remained courageous and immovable. His capital was in ruin before his

eyes. His nobles and subjects were dying around him. The limits of his reign were so narrowed that he might stretch forth his hand, and on every side feel the superior presence of the foe. But he was still unconquered. When Cortés, in the hope that his extremities might induce his submission, persuaded one of his noble captives to bear to Guatemozin proposals to that effect, the stern young monarch, at once commanded the sacrifice of the messenger. Thus baffled in his desire to save and to spare what remained of the city and its defenders, Cortés resolved upon a general assault. The fleet and army prepared to co-operate. While the latter penetrated the city, the brigantines were ordered to batter the houses near the water. At this moment some overtures were made by the Aztecs for accommodation. "Why," said some of the chiefs, stretching forth their emaciated arms to him as he entered their precincts—"Why," said they, "are you slow. Why not put an end to our miseries!" Cortés, moved by the piteous appeal, replied, "I wish not to destroy but save you. Why is your master obstinate? Why will he not treat with me? I wish for this—a single hour will suffice for me to crush him and his people." But the fierce young monarch could not be persuaded to a conference. He remembered the fate of Montezuma, and distrusted the faith of the Spaniards. Chagrined at an obstinacy which at once baffled his humanity and policy, Cortés ordered the assault. His confederate tribes were unleashed for the conflict, and he penetrated the last hold of the Aztec warriors. They were ready to receive him—their most able bodied warriors in the van, covering their feeble and crippled comrades. The women mingled in their ranks, in the streets, and on the house tops, looking a fury in their eyes, which, it was lucky for the Spaniards, could be declared in no more formidable manner. The fury of men and women was alike impotent. In vain did they rain their arrows—in vain did they hurl their missiles upon the invader. They were sent by feeble sinews. Famine, which had failed to subdue their souls, had most effectually sapped the vigour of their arms. But when did men fight more valiantly, and with so little loss of resolution, from the conviction of its fruitlessness? The inequality of power was too great between themselves and the invaders. While the Spanish arquebusiers poured

in their deadly fire on one hand, the brigantines replied by successive vollies on another. The besieged, hemmed in on every side, girt by death, opposed themselves in vain to the torrent. The carnage was horrible; the ground was heaped with slain, and the maddened combatants could only meet in conflict by climbing over the mortal mounds which havoc had raised between them. The narrative, as given by Mr. Prescott, is a terrible one. We had marked it for extract, as a fair specimen of his writing, but our space will not suffer its insertion. Enough that, when sated with slaughter, the Spanish retreat was sounded. Forty thousand men are said to have perished in the work of that one dreadful day.

Such conflicts must soon terminate. No courage, no resolve or resource, can stand them long. The next day, which was the 13th of August, 1521, a day memorable as the close of this dreadful struggle, Cortés prepared to renew the assault. But, willing to afford one more chance of escape to the wretched Aztecs, he sent another message to Guatemozin. The answer was, "Guatemozin is ready to die where he is—he will hold no interview with the Spaniard. It is for him to work his pleasure." "Away, then," said the stern conqueror, "away to your countrymen, and let them prepare for death. The hour is come!" He nevertheless postponed the assault for several hours, in the hope that some change might be induced in the inflexible spirit of the Indian. He seemed reluctant to urge the last desperate measures against so brave an enemy. But his troops murmured at the delay. Rumours were spread that the Aztec monarch was preparing to escape across the lake, and the Spanish General reluctantly gave the signal for the assault. This was, in other words, the signal for massacre. Cortés placed himself upon an *azotea*, which commanded the scene of operations. The Spaniards found their enemy huddled together in a confused crowd of all ages and sexes, in masses so dense as to seem designed less for the purpose of combat, than to facilitate the expected carnage. The causeways were crowded to the water. Some had climbed the terraces; others feebly supported themselves against the walls of the buildings. Their garments were squalid and tattered, and the famine glaring from their eyes, only served to heighten the spectral fe-

rocity of their expression. They possessed the ancient spirit but not its strength, and met the assailants with a flight of arrows. But these feebly seconded their hate. They fell ineffectual from the padded coats of the Spaniards. Then followed the crash of more potent implements of war—the peals of cannon, the sharp, rattling discharge of fire arms, and the shouts, hellish and infuriate, of the herds of Spanish allies, exulting in the near accomplishment of their long contemplated hope of vengeance. Why attempt the description of the horrible scene that followed. Why show the last hopeless struggle of the Aztecs, butchered on the causeways, or gasping in the overwhelming waters in which they sunk on either hand. The battle raged equally on lake and land. The last hope of the lordly race of Tenochtitlan, was extinguished in the bloody horrors of that day. It was at its close when Guatemozin was taken. Bravely, indeed, with a stern resolution worthy of the greatest times and people, had this gallant Indian clung to the falling fortunes of his country. He had done all that man could do in the circumstances under which he stood. He was no mere savage ;—but, with the indomitable obstinacy of one, he united large resources of civilization, and superior powers of intellect and observation. His defence of the capital had been singularly adapted, in most respects, to his own and the condition of his enemy. As we have seen, it was unavailing. It was only then that he attempted flight, and this attempt may have contemplated the safety of his wife and followers rather than his own—may have contemplated nothing less than future struggles with the invader, in other places of security and strength. He was not the Roman fool,

"To die by his own sword,"

so long as there were hopes of good battle, yet in reserve for his countrymen. In the moment of danger and captivity, he betrayed no apprehension. His surrender was much more dignified than that of Santa Anna at Jacinto. When his piragua was encountered by the brigantine of Garci Holguin, and the Spaniards were about to fire, he was the first to rise, armed with buckler and *maquahuitl*, in defiance to the assailants. But the cry of his followers declared him to be their lord. They could implore mercy

for him, having no prayer for themselves. The Spanish captain arrested the fire of his soldiers. At this command, the young monarch lowered his weapons. "I am Guatemozin," he exclaimed, "lead me to Malinche, (Cortés.) I am his prisoner. Let no harm come to my wife and followers." When Holguin told him to command the people in the other canoes to surrender, he replied, with a dejected air,—"It is not necessary. They will fight no longer, when they see that their prince is taken." The fight ceased from that moment. In the conquest of Guatemozin, that of Tenochtitlan was complete. He had been the soul of his empire. It was now a corse, at the mercy of the Spaniard.

When brought into the presence of Cortés, Guatemozin betrayed no sort of apprehension. Emotion he must have shown. His deportment was dignified and modest. As Cortés came forward to receive him, he broke the silence by saying, "I have done all that I could for the defence of my people. I am your prisoner. Deal with me as you list. Dispatch me with this"—laying his hand upon the hilt of a poinard in the General's belt—"and rid me of life at once." Cortés could appreciate the noble character of his captive. "Fear nothing," he replied; "you shall be treated with honour. You have defended your capital like a brave warrior. A Spaniard knows how to respect the valour of his enemy!"

This assurance was unhappily forfeited in the sequel. It is the reproach of Cortés that his noble captive fell a victim to suspicions which do not seem to have been justly founded. He was kept, in a sort of honourable captivity, for some time after the conquest. But, insurrections among his countrymen were laid to his charge. He was put to the torture, and subsequently executed, professing his innocence, reproaching Cortés for his perfidy, and dying like a Prince. Whether the charge were true or not, the better nature of Cortés, when time was allowed for reflection, recoiled at the cruel severity of his proceedings. His conscience smote him for the too ready credence he had given to the accusation,—for the too stern penalty with which he had visited the supposed criminal. He suffered bitterly from a natural remorse, which, while it testifies to his consciousness of crime, at least

equally declares the acuteness and justness of his sensibilities, and, we trust, the merit of his repentance.

Thus fell the wondrous empire of the Aztecs,—an empire of the greatest magnificence, great numbers, and immense resources,—an empire upheld by crime, and maintained by cruel wars,—stained by the most shocking rites and governed by the most relentless tyranny,—the wonder of its own people,—the terror of its neighbours,—the admiration of the European. Its destiny was fulfilled by the stranger, as shadowed out by its own traditions. The great drama which began with the fall of Montezuma, by the hands of his subjects, was carried out to stern completion by the sacrifice of the nobler Guatemozin, to the suspicions of the conqueror. And here our narrative might properly conclude. The triumph of our hero is complete. The object of the grand action which makes the glory of his career, is attained. He is at the summit of his conquests. There is no point of elevation, yet beyond, attainable, which is desirable for him to reach. The further survey presents him in less favourable lights,—shows him struggling against injustice, and finally its victim. The last days of a great man, "fallen from his high estate," have something mournful in them, particularly if he shall have been one accustomed to command. Yet, a biographical propriety hurries us forward. A few paragraphs must suffice to close a history, the leading events of which have been already absorbed in the narrative.

Of the subsequent career of Cortés, in fixing the civil power of Mexico and in extending and making sure his conquests, it will be enough in this place to say, that they prove his resources as a statesman to have been quite as remarkable as those which he had shown in the character of the conqueror. He secured the submission of the country, suppressed insurrection, rebuilt the capital, and, by well conceived expeditions, explored its remotest provinces. When this difficult work was all complete, he returned to Spain, where he found a most brilliant reception. His presence confirmed his conquest over his enemies, who were numerous in that quarter. All jealousy of his designs was set at rest. The Emperor ennobled him, and with the title of "Marquess of the Valley of Oaxaca," conferred upon him a princely domain in Mexico. But the future government of the country he

had won, was not confided to his hands. In his respect, the suspicious policy of Spain differed in no particular from what it had been in the case of Columbus. Greatness is very apt to be distrusted the moment it ceases to be necessary to conquest,—the moment its achievements and discoveries are sure. A military command was given him. He was named Captain-General of New Spain and of the coasts of the South Sea,—a dignity which simply conferred upon him the privilege of making new conquests —if he could. He subsequently married into a noble house and returned to Mexico, where he was regarded with distrust by the authorities. His eager and proud spirit did not suffer him to remain long in unperformance. He fitted out new expeditions, which were only partially successful. He returned to Castile, where he was received with coldness by the Emperor. His offence was two-fold. He had claims upon the crown, and he was no longer fortunate. We pass over the melancholy history of entreaty met with indifference, and complaint answered with impatience. The fate of Cortés, in seeking justice, is a story which is often read. The aged veteran was thrust aside to make way for younger spirits. The monarch found it easier not to acknowledge obligations which he could not recompense ; and, after a fruitless prosecution of his claims for three years, Cortés determined to abandon them and return once more to Mexico. But mortification and disappointment had impaired his health. He was not permitted to re-visit the scene of his conquests, but, taken with a mortal illness, while making preparations for his voyage, he died near Seville, on the 2d December, 1547, in the sixty-third year of his age. He met his end with the same composure with which he had gone into battle,—he made his will, a remarkable document,—confessed his sins, received the holy sacrament, and yielded himself meekly, and with humble confidence, into the hands of his Maker. We read his character in his story. It has been our purpose to make this speak for itself,—to select and bring out the prominent performances of his life, and educe the moral of his life from its successive scenes and performances. What is wanting to our analysis must be supplied by that of Mr. Prescott, to whose delightful history, we trust, we have shown the way to numerous readers.

ARTICLE VI.

THE WRITINGS OF JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.*

We are among those who regard Mr. Cooper as a wronged and persecuted man. We conceive that his countrymen have done him gross injustice—that they have not only shown themselves ungenerous but ungrateful, and that, in lending a greedy ear to the numerous malicious aspersions which have assailed his person and his reputation, they have only given confirmation and strength to the proverbial reproach, of irreverence and ingratitude, to which countries, distinguished by popular governments, have usually been thought obnoxious. We do not mean to regard him as wholly faultless—on the contrary, we look upon Mr. Cooper as a very imprudent person; one whose determined will, impetuous temperament, and great self-esteem, continually hurry forward into acts and expressions of error and impatience. We propose to compare sides in this question:—to put the case fairly between himself and countrymen, and show where the balance of justice lies.

Of Mr. Cooper, little or nothing was known, by the American people at large, until the publication of "the Spy." To a few, perhaps, the novel of "Precaution" had brought him acquainted. That was a very feeble work—coldly correct, elaborately tame—a second or third rate imitation of a very inferior school of writings, known as the social life novel. In works of this class, the imagination can have little play. The exercise of the creative faculty is almost entirely denied. The field of speculation is limited; and the analysis of minute shades of character, is all the privilege which taste and philosophy possess, for lifting the narra-

* The Two Admirals. A Tale. By the Author of the Pilot, &c. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard. 1842.

tive above the province of mere lively dialogue, and sweet and fanciful sentiment. The ordinary events of the household, or of the snug family circle, suggest the only materials; and a large gathering of the set, at ball or dinner, affords incident of which the novelist is required to make the highest use. Writers of much earnestness of mood, originality of thought, or intensity of imagination, seldom engage in this class of writing. Scott attempted it in St. Ronan's Well, and failed;—rising only into the rank of Scott, in such portions of the story as, by a very violent transition, brought him once more into the bolder displays of wild and stirring romance. He consoled himself with the reflection that male writers were not good at these things. His conclusion, that such writings were best handled by the other sex, may be, or not, construed into a sarcasm.

Mr. Cooper failed egregiously in "Precaution." So far as we know, and as we believe, that work fell still-born from the press. But for the success of "the Spy," and the succeeding works, it never would have been heard of. But "the Spy" was an event. It was the boldest and best attempt at the historical romance which had ever been made in America. It is somewhat the practice, at this day, to disparage that story. This is in very bad taste. The book is a good one,—full of faults, perhaps, and blunders; but full also of decided merits, and marked by a boldness of conception, and a courage in progress, which clearly showed the confidence of genius in its own resources. The conception of the Spy, as a character, was a very noble one. A patriot in the humblest condition of life,—almost wholly motiveless unless for his country—enduring the persecutions of friends, the hate of enemies—the doomed by both parties to the gallows—enduring all in secret, without a murmur,—without a word, when a word might have saved him,—all for his country; and all, under the palsying conviction, not only that his country never could reward him, but that, in all probability, the secret of his patriotism must perish with him, and nothing survive but that obloquy under which he was still content to live and labour.

It does not lessen the value of such a novel, nor the ideal truth of such a conception, that such a character is not often to be found. It is sufficiently true if it wins our sympathies and com-

mands our respect. This is always the purpose of the ideal, which, if it can effect such results, becomes at once a model and a reality. The character of the "Spy" was not the only good one of the book. Lawton and Sitgreaves were both good conceptions, though rather exaggerated ones. Lawton was a somewhat too burly Virginian; and his appetite was too strong an ingredient in his chivalry. But, as his origin was British, this may have been due to the truthfulness of portraiture.

The defect of the story was rather in its action than its characters. This is the usual and grand defect in all Mr. Cooper's stories. In truth, there is very little story. He seems to exercise none of his genius in the invention of his fable. There is none of that careful grouping of means to ends, and all, to the one end of the dénouëment, which so remarkably distinguished the genius of Scott, and made all the parts of his story fit as compactly as the work of the joiner,—but he seems to hurry forward in the delineation of scene after scene, as if wholly indifferent to the catastrophe. The consequence is, that his catastrophe is usually forced and unsatisfactory. He is, for this reason, compelled frequently, at the close, to begin the work of invention;—to bring out some latent matter,—to make unlooked for discoveries, and prove his hero, be he hunter or pirate, to have been the son of somebody of unexpected importance;—a discovery which, it is fancied, will secure him a greater degree of the reader's favour, than he could have before commanded. Mr. Cooper seems to rely wholly on the spirit and success of certain scenes. Take, for example, the work before us. Analyze the parts of the Two Admirals. The action of the several fleets in the several progresses of the sea, is, in truth, the only portion of the work on which Mr. Cooper has exercised himself. We may see, also, in the purposeless career of young Wychecombe, the true, and Wychecombe, the pretender, how little pains the author has taken, either in determining, from the first, what they shall severally be and do, or by what performances their conduct, respectively, shall be distinguished. It is very evident, from the first introduction of the American Wychecombe, that he was to become a person of some importance—the hero, in fact; and, for this, the mind of the reader is insensibly prepared by the first chapters of the

story. Had Mr. Cooper planned any story at all, this young man must have been the hero—must have maintained throughout, and concentrated within himself, the chief interest of the performance. So, on the other hand, the false Wychecombe, the bastard, was to be his foil—the villain of the piece—and the conflict between the two for mastery, is the great issue for which the reader of the book prepares himself. But, unwilling to give himself the trouble of inventing situations, by which this issue could be made up or carried on, Mr. Cooper surrenders himself to the progress of events. He leaves to one to beget and occasion the other. Hence the desultory character of his writings; the violence of transition; the strange neglect to which certain of his characters are destined, in whom he at first strives to interest us; and the hard scramble, which the persons of the drama are compelled to make, each to get into his proper place, for the *tableau vivant*, at the falling of the curtain. This young man, Wychecombe, the American, is nothing, and does nothing; and what a poor devil is his foil or shadow, Tom, the *nullus*—"*nullus*" indeed. These persons, brought in with much care, and elaborately pourtrayed to the reader, are yet—so far as the valuable portions of the story are concerned—left entirely unemployed. The despatching of Wycherley Wychecombe, in the Druid, by Admiral Bluewater, to Admiral Oakes, was one of those simple schemes by which the author still endeavoured to maintain an interest in the youth, in whom he felt that he had, at the beginning, too greatly awakened the interest of the readers. The whole machinery here is feeble, and a writer of romance cannot more greatly err than when he subjects his hero to the continual influence of events. We have no respect for heroes placed always in subordinate positions—sent hither and thither—baffled by every breath of circumstance—creatures without will, and constantly governed by the caprices of other persons. This was the enfeebling characteristic in Scott's heroes. Hence it was that the true interest seldom settled on the person whom he chose to be his hero. Look, for example, at his Waverly,—who, contrasted with Claverhouse, or the brother of Flora Mac Ivor, shrunk into a very petty person. How small a person is his Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, in comparison with Brian de Bois Guilbert;—his Morton with his Burley; his Ro-

land Græme, his Quentin Durward, and, indeed, móst of his chosen heroes, in comparison with numerous other characters employed as their companions and opposites. This defect, which would be fatal always to purely dramatic composition, must be equally injurious to works of romance, in which, to a certain extent, all the standards are dramatic, and from the somewhat dramatic development of which, by continual action, the chief interest and anxiety of the reader are maintained. Availing ourselves of the dramatic *aside*, we may remark *en-passant*, that the conception of situation in which the two admirals are placed, in the progress of this story, is particularly admirable and touching.—Their respective characteristics are fairly drawn and nicely elaborated, and whenever they have anything to do with the action, they appear to advantage, and operate in a manner equally characteristic and effective. It is, perhaps, the great fault of Mr. Cooper, that, conceiving some few scenes, or even a single one, with great beauty and boldness, he discards from his mind all serious concern for the rest—for all those by which they are introduced and finished. These scenes, in consequence, rise up abruptly—and so far imposingly—like an isolated mountain wall from the dead level of a plain. We are astonished when we see them,—we wonder and admire,—but our feet have grown weary in the search for them,—we have had a long journey,—and the querulous will be apt to ask, as now they do—"fine sight, indeed, very lofty and imposing, but, was it worth while to come so far in search of it?" An equal care in the invention of the fable, at the beginning, would obviate this question. The traveller would start, as it were, in the morning of the day—a cheering sunshine above him—the green woods around him, and some merry songbirds, inviting his forward progress with the most seductive notes. Watchful when he is about to grow weary, his conductor (the novelist) suddenly points his eye to a sweet stream, which glides, like a silvery serpent, through the forest,—seen only at moments, and stealing from sight with a slow sounding but musical murmur which insensibly invites to follow. Easily beguiled, the wayfarer turns aside for an instant, and makes other discoveries. Step by step he is won along—now ravished by flowers, now startled by dreary caverns, wild precipices, and mysterious shadows of rock

and forest. Now he passes rivers, and anon the cultivated fields; now he looks on lake or prairie, and now he starts with the sudden rush and tumble of the cataract. At length, towards the close of the day, he arrives at the object of his quest. The desired spectacle, whether grand and terrible, or simply beautiful and sweet, unfolds itself before him. The awful mountain, towering in forbidding grandeur before his eye, or the snow white cottage, smiling in imploring sweetness, at his feet. Around him are the companions of the day—the persons of his story—those who have joyed and those who have wept—the noble hero who led, and the envious rival who would have destroyed—the venerable form that counselled wisdom, or the dear woman that, with greater success, counselled only love. The dénouëment, whether grave or gay, has taken place, and we rejoice in a progress which has warmed our sentiments, inspired just and generous thoughts, informed our affections, and raised our minds in the contemplation of the noblest images of intellect and feelings. Such were Scott's stories. In the gradual progress of the reader, as of a traveller through a new country, the tale carried us on, step by step, from beauty to beauty, from event to event, each beauty becoming brighter and dearer, each event more exciting and interesting, until we reach the crowning event of all; completing, in a fitting manner, and with appropriate superiority, the whole continuous and marvellous history. There was no violence done to the reader's judgment—his sense of propriety or of justice. So insensible was the progress, so natural the transitions, that we gave ready faith to all his wonders; and the eyes became filled with tears, and the breathing suspended, as the events thickened and strove together; generating in our souls, hope and fear, anxious apprehensions, and those emotions, equally exciting and honourable to our nature, which awaken, in unavoidable testimony, to the skill of the consummate artist. This is the harmonious achievement. It is a tolerably easy thing to write a spirited sketch —a startling event—a hurried and passionate delineation of an action, which, in itself, involves, necessarily, strife and hate, and the wilder phrenzies of the human heart and feeling. But the perfecting of the wondrous whole—the admirable adaptation of means to ends—the fitness of parts,—the propriety of the action—the

employment of the right materials,—and the fine architectural proportions of the fabric,—these are the essentials which determine the claim of the writer to be the BUILDER!—by whose standard other artists are to model,—by whose labours other labourers are to learn.

The success of the "Spy" was very great, and it at once gave Mr. Cooper reputation in Europe. It may be said to have occasioned a greater sensation in Europe than at home;—and there were good reasons for this. At that period America had no literature. Just before this time, or about this time, it was the favourite sarcasm of the British Reviewers that such a thing as an American book was never read. Mr. Irving, it is true, was writing his sweet and delicate essays; but he was not accounted in England an American writer, and he himself,—no doubt with a sufficient policy—his own fortunes alone being the subject of consideration—took no pains to assert his paternity. The publication of the "Spy" may be assumed to have been the first practical reply to a sarcasm, which, since that day, has found its ample refutation. It was immediately republished in England, and soon after, we believe, found its way into half the languages of Europe. Its farther and more important effect was upon the intellect of our own country. It at once opened the eyes of our people to their own resources. It was something of a wonder, to ourselves, that we should be able—(strange, self-destroying humility in a people springing directly from the Anglo-Norman stock)—to produce a writer who should so suddenly, and in his very first work ("Precaution" was not known and scarcely named in that day) rise to such an eminence—equalling most, excelling most, and second to but one, of the great historical romance writers of Britain. This itself was an important achievement—a step gained, without which, no other step could possibly have been taken. It need scarcely be said, that the efforts of a nation at performance,—particularly in letters and the arts,—must first be preceded by a certain consciousness of the necessary resources. This consciousness, in the case of America, was wanting. Our colonial relation to Great Britain had filled us with a feeling of intellectual dependance, of which our success in shaking off her political dominion had in no respect relieved us. We had not

then, and, indeed, have not entirely to this day, arrived at any just idea of the inevitable connexion between an ability to maintain ourselves in arts as well as in arms—the ability in both cases arising only from our intellectual resources, and a manly reliance upon the just origin of national strength,—Self-dependence ! To Mr. Cooper the merit is due, of having first awakened us to this self-reference,—to this consciousness of mental resources, of which our provincialism dealt, not only in constant doubts, but in constant denials. The first step is half the march, as in ordinary cases, the first blow is half the battle. With what rapidity after that did the American press operate. How many new writers rose up suddenly, the moment that their neighbours had made the discovery that there were such writers—that such writers should be. Every form of fiction, the legend, tale, novel and romance—the poem, narrative and dramatic—were poured out with a prolific abundance, which proved the possession, not only of large resources of thought, but of fancy, and of an imagination equal to every department of creative fiction. It will not matter to show that a great deal of this was crude, faulty, undigested—contracted and narrow in design, and spasmodic in execution. The demand of the country called for no more. The wonder was that, so suddenly, and at such short notice, such resources could be found as had not before been imagined. The sudden rise and progress of German literature seems to have been equally surprising and sudden—equally the result of a national impulse, newly moved in a novel and unexpected direction. The wonderful birth and progress of American letters in the last twenty years—and in every department of thought, art and science, so far from discouraging, because of its imperfections, holds forth the most signal encouragement to industry and hope—showing most clearly, that the deficiency was not in the resource but in the demand, not in the inferior quality, or limited quantity, but in the utter indifference of our people to the possession of the material.

Having struck the vein, and convinced the people not only that there was gold in the land, but that the gold of the land was good, Mr. Cooper proceeded with proper industry to supply the demand which his own genius had occasioned in the markets, as well of Europe as his own country, for his productions. "The Spy" was

followed by Lionel Lincoln, the Pioneers, the Last of the Mohicans, the Pilot, Red Rover, Prairie, Water Witch, &c. We speak from memory—we are not so sure that we name these writings in their proper order, nor is this important to us in the plan of this paper, which does not contemplate their examination in detail. All these works were more or less interesting. In most of them, the improvement in style, continuity of narrative, propriety of incident, &c., was obvious. In all of them were obvious, in greater or less degree, the characteristics of the author. The plots were generally simple, not always coherent, and proving either an incapacity for, or an indifference to the exercise of much invention. The reader was led through long and dead levels of dialogue—sensible enough,—sometimes smart, sarcastic or playful,—occasionally marked by depth or originality of thought, and occasionally exhibiting resources of study and reflection in the departments of law and morals, which are not common to the ordinary novel writer. But these things kept us from the story,—to which they were sometimes foreign, and always in some degree, unnecessary. His characters were not often felicitous, and, as in the case of most writers, Mr. Cooper had hobbies on which he rode too often, to the great disquiet of his friends and companions. He rang the changes on words, as Scott once suffered himself to do, in the "Prodigious" of Dominie Sampson, until readers sickened of the stupidity; and occasionally, as in the case of David Gamut, mistaking his own powers of the humorous, he afflicted us with the dispensation of a bore, which qualified seriously the really meritorious in his performance. But, to compensate us for these trials of our tastes and tempers, he gave us the most exquisite scenes of minute artifice, as in his Indian stories,—in which the events were elaborated with a nicety and patience, reminding us of the spider at his web, that curious and complicated spinner, which may well be employed to illustrate by his own labours and ingenuity the subtle frame-work of Indian cunning—the labyrinth of his artifice,—his wily traps and pitfalls, and indomitable perseverance. In these details of Indian art and resource, Mr. Cooper was inimitable. In his pursuits, flights, captures,—in his encounters,—cunning opposed to cunning,—man to man—the trapper and the hunter, against the red man whose life he envies

and emulates,—Mr. Cooper has no superior as he has had no master. His conception of the frontier white man, if less true than picturesque, is also not less happy as an artistical conception of great originality and effect. In him, the author embodied his ideal of the philosopher of the foremast—Hawkeye is a sailor in a hunting shirt—and in this respect he committed no error in propriety. The sailor and the forester both derive their philosophies and character from the same sources,—though the one disdains the land, and the other trembles at the sight of the sea. They both think and feel, with a highly individual nature, that has been taught, by constant contemplation, in scenes of solitude. The vast unbroken ranges of forest, to its one lonely occupant, press upon the mind with the same sort of solemnity which one feels condemned to a life of partial isolation upon the ocean. Both are permitted that degree of commerce with their fellow beings, which suffice to maintain in strength the sweet and sacred sources of their humanity. It is through these that they are commended to our sympathies, and it is through the same medium that they acquire that habit of moral musing and meditation which expresses itself finely in the most delightful of all human philosophies. The very isolation to which, in the most successful of his stories, Mr. Cooper subjects his favourite personages, is, alone, a proof of his strength and genius. While the ordinary writer, the man of mere talent, is compelled to look around him among masses for his material, he contents himself with one man, and flings him upon the wilderness. The picture then, which follows, must be one of intense individuality. Out of this one man's nature, his moods and fortunes, he spins his story. The agencies and dependencies are few. With the self-reliance which is only found in true genius, he goes forward into the wilderness, whether of land or ocean; and the vicissitudes of either region, acting upon the natural resources of one man's mind, furnish the whole material of his work-shop. This mode of performance is highly dramatic, and thus it is that his scout, his trapper, his hunter, his pilot, all live to our eyes and thoughts, the perfect ideals of moral individuality. For this we admire them—love them we do not—they are objects not made to love—they do not appeal to our affections so much as to our minds. We admire their progress through sea

and forest—their strange ingenuity, the skill with which they provide against human and savage enemies, against cold and hunger, with the same sort of admiration which we feel at watching any novel progress in arts or arms—a noble ship darting like a bird over the deep, unshivering, though the storm threatens to shiver every thing else around it—a splendid piece of machinery which works to the most consummate ends by a *modus operandi*, which we yet fail to detect—any curious and complex invention which dazzles our eyes, confounds our judgment, and mocks the search which would discover its secret principles. Take, for example, the character of the "Pilot," in the rapid and exciting story of that name. Here is a remarkable instance of the sort of interest which Mr. Cooper's writings are chiefly calculated to inspire. Marble could not be more inflexible than this cold, immovable, pulseless personage. He says nothing, shows nothing, promises nothing. Yet we are interested in his very first appearance. Why and how? Naturally enough by the anxiety with which he is sought and looked for;—by the fact that he promises nothing, yet goes to work, without a word, in a manner that promises every thing. We feel, at a glance, that if any mortal man can save the ship, he is the man. Why is this? Simply because he goes to work, without a word, as if it was in him to do so;—as if a calm consciousness of power was his possession; as if he knew just where to lay his hands, and in what direction to expend his strength. He shows *the capacity for work*, and this constitutes the sort of manhood upon which all men rely in moments of doubt or danger. Yet he gives you no process of reasoning—he has no word save that which commands obedience,—he neither storms, implores, nor threatens—he has no books,—he deals in no declamation. He is the ideal of an abstract but innate power, which we acknowledge and perhaps fear, but cannot fathom. All is hidden within himself, and, except when at work, he is nothing—he might as well be stone. Yet, around him,—such a man—a wonderful interest gathers like a halo—bright and inscrutable,—which fills us with equal curiosity and reverence. With him, a man of whom we know nothing,—whom we see now for the first time,—whom we may never see again,—whom we cannot love—whom we should never seek; and with his ship,—

timbers, tackle, ropes, spars and cordage,—a frail fabric, such as goes to and fro along our shores, in our daily sight, without awakening a single thought or feeling;—with ship and man we grow fascinated beyond all measure of ordinary attraction. In his hands the ship becomes a being, instinct with life, beauty, sentiment—in danger, and to be saved;—and our interest in her fate, grows from our anxiety to behold the issue, in which human skill, courage and ingenuity, are to contend with storm and sea, rocks and tempest—as it were, man against omnipotence. Our interest springs from our curiosity rather than from our affections. We do not care a straw for the inmates of the vessel. They are very ordinary persons, that one man excepted—and *he* will not suffer us to love him. But *manhood*, true manhood, is a sight, always, of wondrous beauty and magnificence. The courage that looks steadily on the danger, however terrible; the composure that never swerves from its centre under the pressure of unexpected misfortune;—the knowledge that can properly apply its strength, and the adroitness and energy, which, feeling the force of a manly will, flies to their task, in instant and hearty obedience;—these form a picture of singular beauty, and must always rivēt the admiration of the spectator. We regard Mr. Cooper's "Pilot"—breasting the storm, tried by, and finally baffling all its powers, as the Prometheus in action—inflexible, ready to endure,—isolated, but still human in a fond loyalty to all the great hopes and interests of humanity.

Hawkeye, the land sailor of Mr. Cooper, is, with certain suitable modifications, the same personage. We see and admire, in him, the qualities of hardihood and endurance, coolness, readiness of resource, keen, clear sighted observation, just reflection, and a sincere, direct, honest heart. He is more human than the other, since, naturally of gentler temperament, the life-conflict has not left upon his mind so many traces of its volcanic fires. He has had more patience, been more easily persuaded; has endured with less struggle if not more fortitude, and, in his greater pliancy, has escaped the greater force of the tempest. But he is, in all substantial respects, the same personage, and inspires us with like feelings. In the hour of danger,—at midnight,—in the green camp of the hunter,—trembling women, timid men, and weeping

children, grouped together in doubt,—all eyes turn to him, as, on the sea, in storm, all eyes address themselves to the "Pilot." If any one can save them he is the man. Meanwhile, the shouts of savages are heard on every side,—the fearful whoop of slaughter;—as, on the sea, the wind howls through the ship's cordage, and the storm shrieks a requiem, in anticipation of ultimate triumph, around the shivering inmates. It is only upon true manhood that man can rely, and these are genuine men—not blocks, not feathers—neither dull, nor light of brain,—neither the stubbornly stupid, nor the frothily shallow. Now, as nothing in nature is more noble than a noble-minded, whole-souled man,—however ignorant, however poor, however deficient in imposing costume or imposing person,—so nothing, in nature, is better calculated to win the homage and command the obedience of men, than the presence of such a person in their moments of doubt and danger. It is inevitable, most usually, that such a man will save them, if they are to be saved by human agency. To Mr. Cooper we owe several specimens of this sort of moral manhood. It does not qualify our obligation to him, that they have their little defects,—that he has sometimes failed to hit the true line that divides the simplicity of nature, from the puerility of ignorance or childhood. His pictures are as perfect, of their kind, as the artist of fiction has ever given us. We say this after due reflection.

The Sea and American Forest Tales of Mr. Cooper, were at length superseded, when this gentleman visited Europe, by others of a very different class. Travelling on the continent, with objects of interest and novelty continually before his eyes, it was very natural that he should desire to try his hand at objects of foreign mould and material. The institutions of Europe, where they differed from our own, were also subjects provoking curiosity and calling for examination. These might be discussed in story;—the old traditions and institutions of a country naturally go together, either in connexion or contrast;—and the genius of our countryman conceived the novel idea of so framing his narrative, as to make it illustrate the radical differences, in operation and effect, of the policy of the new world, in opposition to that of the old. There was yet another reason for this change of scene and material. Mr. Cooper entertained a notion, expressed

in some one or more of his prefaces, that the literary material of his own country was too limited and too deficient in variety, to admit of frequent employment. He thought it too easily exhausted, and though he did not say so, it was very evident, at that time, that he thought he himself had already exhausted it. We need scarcely say that we think all this a very great error. In Mr. Cooper's hands, no doubt, there would be a want of variety; not because of any deficiency in the material, but, simply, because the mind of Mr. Cooper is limited in its grasp. It is too individual in its aims and agencies,—does not often vary, but rather multiplies the same forms, characters, images and objects, through different media—now enlarging and now depressing them —now throwing them into greater shadow, and now bringing them out into stronger light—seldom entirely discarding them for others, and we should think not easily capable of doing so. His characters are uniformly the same, his incidents are seldom varied;—the whole change which he effects in his story, consists in new combinations of the same circumstances, heightened, now and then, by auxiliary events, which are seldom of much additional importance. In Indian life and sailor life, he was almost uniformly successful—for the simple reason, that such stories called simply for the display of individual character. They enabled him to devote his genius, as would be always the desire of his mind, to a single object. He took a single captive, after the manner of Sterne, and drew from him, whether in success or suffering, the whole interest of his story. Whenever it became necessary to deal with groups, as in Lionel Lincoln, he failed. To manage the progress of one leading personage, and to concentrate in his portraiture his whole powers, has been the invariable secret of Mr. Cooper's success. We very soon lose all interest in his subordinates. Take away from his stories one or two of the personages, and the rest are the merest puppets. The Spy contained the best specimens of his grouping, but a large portion of it depended entirely on Harvey Birch, and, to so great a degree was this disparity carried, in the use of his dramatis personæ, that, in some of the scenes between the Spy and Henry Wharton, the latter almost sinks into contempt, in consequence of his strange feebleness or deficiencies of character. Mr. Cooper possesses some of the

mental and physical characteristics of Lord Byron, in similar degree. He is equally a person of strong will, great impetuosity of character, and intense self-esteem. Such persons inevitably concentrate themselves upon a few objects of interest; and to these they devote themselves with a gush of enthusiasm, which, to minds of less *one-sidedness*, is either amusing or astonishing. So in their social characteristics,—so in their loves and hates,—the one object of regard, for the time being, driving out of sight every other. This is caused by a peculiar organization. It is the preponderance of blood, which, not preventing or baffling the mind, yet impels its exercise in one direction, and confers upon it a marvellous strength in doing so. Such writers—and Milton partook of this—and hence his tragedy of Paradise Lost became a poem —and hence his dramas are all monologues—such writers, throw their whole souls into one or more characters, and make all the rest subordinate. Such was particularly the case with Lord Byron. His Harold and Giaour, and Lara, and Manfred, and Selim, are all, in greater or less degree, modifications of the same character. His Sardanapalus and Juan, are the same persons also, though in a rather better humour, possibly, from the better digestion of the author at the time of writing. It would not be difficult to trace Mr. Cooper's one ideal through all his novels. Even in the Bravo, one of his European works, we find the Pilot and Natty Bumppo, where we should least look for them, in the person of Jacopo, the assassin of Venice.

The writer of European romance, unquestionably, possesses greater resources in history than he who confines himself to what is purely American. Time, which hallows all that he touches, had there laid away precious stores for centuries, long before the new world was opened to the eye of European day. The antiquities of the old world are so many treasures of fiction, to attain which, the critic of the American story, must task his invention. But this privilege is left him—this cannot be denied; and, possessed of the requisite resources of imagination, he needs but a slender skein of raw material—a solitary item—a fragmentary fact—a word—an action,—and his mind instantly conceives the plan and purpose, out of which he fabricates the divine, and most enduring forms of art.

Persuaded of the inadequacy of native resource,—struck with the novelty of European customs and superstitions,—and, most probably, anxious to measure lances, on their own ground, with the great masters of the art in Europe, Mr. Cooper followed up his American stories, with a series which were wholly foreign. The first and best of these was the Bravo. This was succeeded by the Heidenmauer, the Headsman, &c. It is doubtful whether these works maintained the reputation of Mr. Cooper abroad. They certainly failed to do so at home. Yet they were not failures. They contained many beautiful scenes,—some fine moral and dramatic pictures—occasionally a touching, and sometimes, a thrilling incident, managed with great art, and of excelling beauty—such, for example, as was the murder of the Fisherman by the Venetian Police on the lagune at midnight, contained in the Romance of the Bravo. In some respects these works were an improvement on the American. Their style was better, the plots more intricate, and, though still inartistical, showed more painstaking and better management. Their stories, however—overlaid with discussion and remarks on the effect of laws and institutions upon countries, men and manners—were inferior in interest—there was less felicitous display of scenery, and, as the author was less confident of his knowledge, much of the description was vague, and the characters, framed under hurried glimpses and imperfect observation, were necessarily formal and frigid, wanting in earnestness and life, slow in action, and feeble in will and purpose.

To these succeeded a satirical work entitled the Monnikins, which was followed by a "Letter to his Countrymen." These performances, which are among the least popular of the numerous writings of our author, are among those which have contributed in latter days to lessen his popularity and subtract, whether justly or not, from his well earned claims to pre-eminence, as among the first writers of his age. For the proper understanding of Mr. C.'s position we must rise to a consideration of other subjects.

Mr. Cooper is a man, as we have already indicated, very much given to intensifying every subject which affects his mind ;—a man of that earnest, and not easily satisfied temper, who resolutely perseveres in what he undertakes, and in the prosecution of inquiry or argument, is very apt to probe a matter to the

bottom, without giving much heed to the sensibility he wounds. Such men are necessary in every age for the progress of truth, and they incur always the penalties of the reformer. If not crucified or stoned, they are pelted by missiles of one sort or another, the principal of which, in our day, are defamation and slander. In Europe, Mr. Cooper was soon made aware of the humble, and even contemptuous estimate, which was every where put upon the American character. We, at home, urged by our own vanities, and miserably bemocked by the spurious flatteries of false prophets,—school-boy orators and selfish demagogues,—are really of opinion that we not only are, but are universally regarded as, one of the greatest people on the face of the earth. Of this folly and falsehood, Mr. Cooper undertakes to disabuse us. He discovered, very soon after being in Europe, that we were thought a very small people. Our national and narrow economy seldom permitted any proper displays abroad of our national power, and such as were made were supposed to be rather discreditable than otherwise. The people of the Continent knew us chiefly by British opinions, which were, usually, not merely unfavourable, but scornful in the last degree. This opinion found its expression in a thousand ways. It was the habitual language of the Englishman when the name of American was spoken; and Mr. Cooper records it as a fact, known to himself as to every body that ever travelled on the Continent, that nothing was more common than the practice of the British traveller, to write, on the books kept at the public houses in the chief cities, the most contemptuous comments, on himself and country, in connection with the recorded name of every American. The people of the Continent could easily believe the propriety and justice of this scorn; for, as the Englishman himself was odious among them, by reason of his bad manners, and as they just knew enough of our history to know that we are sprung from the same stocks with him, it was not difficult to arrive at the conclusion, that, what he himself said of his descendant was likely to be true enough. There were other reasons why they should be easy of faith on this subject. Certain young Americans had been behaving badly among them; thrusting themselves by various arts upon society; begging and borrowing money, and indulging in other practices,

scarcely less dishonourable, which naturally cast a stigma upon the nation with which they were identified. Mr. Cooper, a proud man, felt this condition of things like a pang:—an impetuous man, he undertook, in some measure, to correct them. He spoke out his defiance to the English, by whom his nation was slandered; and freely denounced the spurious Americans, by whom the country was disgraced. After this, it did not need that he should publish satirical books in order to make enemies and meet denunciation. His hostility to the English secured it to him in sufficient abundance from the British press; and his unsparing reproof of the young Americans, provoking not only their anger, but that of their friends, was quite enough to engage against him the active hostility of numberless enemies among the newspapers, and even the literary journals, in this country. Our readers need not be told, that, in such a torrent of news and literary papers (so called) with which the American world is flooded, it is not possible for many among them to possess a tone or character of their own. In opinion, as in action, a few lead the way and the rest follow. It was enough that the British press denounced Mr. Cooper, for the American press, very generally, to denounce him likewise. It would be a day of independence, truly, when we should throw off our servile faith in the justice of British judgment, and the superiority of British opinion. To this, the virulence of personal and party antipathy gave additional tongues, and the consequence was, that, while Mr. Cooper was most busy in asserting our character and defending our institutions abroad, the press at home was equally busy in denouncing him for his pains.

It might have been an easy part for an ordinary American writer to have played in Great Britain. It is so still. You have but to frame your books so as to flatter English nobility—conciliate their prejudices,—show the most habitual deference for their preposterous claims to controlling dignity—studiously forbear all freedom of opinion—all independence of thought—and let them see that you value a breakfast with Mr. Rogers, as a matter of too serious importance to be foregone for the pitiful object of proving that you are at once a man and an American. If you can wholly suppress the latter fact, it is all the better for you—for your success, at least, in getting your breakfast with Rogers or

Christopher North, and partaking of the splendid enjoyments of Almacks, under the auspices of Lady Jersey.

Mr. Cooper was not the man for this. He was not the man to make improper and unbecoming concessions, either on his own part, or on the part of his country. His nature led him to defiance, to resistance, to the unmeasured language of his resentment. We do not say that he was altogether wise in this. It is one thing to submit to indignity—it is another to be forever on the look-out, as if expecting to meet it. We are not so sure that Mr. Cooper was not wrong sometimes in his impetuosity—in his violence of tone and manner. There are some things in his deportment, as shown in his own travels, which we are constrained to disapprove and censure; and we are apprehensive that he sometimes mistook the burly defiance of the backwoodsman for the calm, manly tone of gentlemanly independence. This charge has been made against him. We do not make it. We are afraid, however, that the inference may be drawn fairly from some passages of his own writings, in his book of travels in England. His game, while in that country, for the proper defence of his own, was to "carry the war into Africa." To retort upon them their own charges,—to show them the mirror for self-reflection,—and to prove that they, too, were made of penetrable stuff. Mr. Cooper, of all our literary men abroad, seems to have been almost the only one who did not sink his Americanism—who strove to maintain it, and employed his cudgel, whenever his country was defamed, with the able hand and the hearty good-will and courage of a sailor. Whatever his errors may have been, they are more than redeemed in our eyes by his sturdy, uncompromising attachment to his country. And who can prescribe to the wronged and the indignant, what shall be the measure of his anger?—who shall say, in such and such terms only shall you speak out your feelings? It is for the greatly injured to determine for themselves what shall be their measure of redress. At all events, it was the unkindest fortune, that, while Mr. Cooper was thus doing battle for his countrymen, abroad,—whatever may have been the propriety of his course,—he should not only not find sympathy at home, but, on the contrary, rebuke. At that time, several of our newspapers were either wholly, or in

part, conducted by foreigners. These naturally had sympathies only with the countries from which they came. They naturally watched the progress of the foreign controversy, and took sides with their own countrymen. Communications from abroad appeared in our literary and other journals, furnishing accounts of the affair, as may be supposed, hostile to Mr. Cooper. Among a class of our literary papers, such communications were particularly acceptable. No matter whom they disparaged, in what degree of defamation—no matter what prurient displays of vice were made,—what morals suffered here, or what character was defamed or slandered in Europe. It was taken for granted—and was, indeed, a truth too little to be questioned—that there was a morbid hungering, on the part of a large class of American pretenders, to be duly apprized of the doings abroad, particularly of the excesses of the English fashionable world; and some of the most atrocious revelations, fatal to female character, and garnished with the most brutal details of vice, were made by anonymous foreign correspondents, in publications which were especially addressed to American ladies. With foreign editors and foreign correspondents, each having, it would seem, *carte blanche*, Mr. Cooper, like every other subject of notoriety or distinction, had the usual risk of defamation to encounter. To these, in his case, is to be added the hostility of party, which he had provoked by an imprudent pamphlet, the "Letter to his Countrymen." This performance took the republican or democratic side with the Jackson dynasty, at the time of its fierce conflict with the old United States Bank. It was not wanting in ability. Some portions of the writer's argument were new and ingenious, and much of it was interesting. But the performance, as a whole, was in bad taste. It lacked congruity. It mixed up various matters of examination and complaint,—an olla podrida of literary, personal and political grievance; which, however well enough discussed, if separate, were yet oddly put together, in such a manner as to impair the value and the force of all. The superior egotism of tone which pervaded it, was not its least misfortune and defect. This brought into the field a new and more bitter host of enemies—unscrupulous as the first, and with interests more actively involved in the pressing concerns of party,—

such as never suffer any restraints of justice or veneration to impede them in their utterance. Nobody thought much of combating Mr. Cooper's opinions, but all seemed at once impressed with the impertinence of a literary man presuming to entertain a political opinion at all. Even those who concurred with the views of Mr. Cooper, seemed equally to concur with his assailants, in the absurd notion that his literary pursuits effectually excluded him from any right to give them utterance. Of his prudence in doing so, as a selfish man, thinking only of the success of his forthcoming publication, we, of course, offer no opinion. Enough, in this place, to add, that it is to be regretted, not that our literary men do not more frequently engage in politics, but that our politicians are not more generally literary men—at all events, not so very illiterate. Some increase of political decency might be the fruit of their improvement in this respect.

The warfare waged against Mr. Cooper was neither just nor generous. Envy loves always a shining mark. Dulness hates distinction. He had offended party, which is the most brutal of all assailants—a gross, blind savage, equally curbless, pitiless and conscienceless. He had offended some small Americans abroad, who were eager, under the cover of patriotism, or any other cover, to revenge their petty personal grievances. Besides, he had reached that eminence, which, making his name a familiar and accepted word, was the sufficient reason with the envious and the mean for passing upon him the sentence of ostracism. He must be voted into banishment. This, perhaps, is the ordinary penalty of distinction. It is the fate of all superiority. The lot of genius is most commonly isolation. It is not a charge which can be peculiarly addressed to the American people, that they leave their own prophets to disesteem. But Mr. Cooper, lacking the humility of the prophet, was necessarily exposed to that greater odium with which injustice resents every effort to disparage or deny its judgments. His egotism of character left him particularly exposed to the missiles of their ridicule. He had conceived the notion that foreign governments were concerned and busy in putting him down; and that, to this cause, he was indebted for the daily assaults to which he was subjected. But for the intense self-esteem which distinguishes his mind, this

notion never would have troubled it. He would have known, in the first place, that politicians generally have been of that mole-breed, which knows nothing of the above-ground workings of literature. They annex too little importance, for their own and the good of the country, to the makers of books and ballads—though these build up and overturn empires. Motives much more reasonable, and sufficiently numerous, were not wanting for these attacks. We have, in part, already assigned them. But malice, envy, vanity and party, are never in want of motives for the destruction of those who stand in their sunshine, or obstruct their performances; and with their victim pointed out, the "little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche and Sweetheart," were soon in full cry after their distinguished and common enemy. The little dogs of literature needed but to be set on. It was quite an event, calculated to raise them vastly in their own eyes and that of their neighbours, to be seen engaged in the noble business of worrying any more majestic form; and half the two-penny sheets, of dirty yellow, from Squam Beach to Little Harkaway Swamp, on the elbow of Oregon, were eager in squirting out their small supplies of storm, from the tubs in which they churned it, as the weekly periodical supply was demanded. The impatience of Mr. Cooper, which would not suffer him to wait, and his self-esteem, which would not suffer him to place a just estimate on his assailants, hurried him still farther into this unwise controversy. When we use the word controversy, we do not employ it in a very literal acceptation. He did not challenge them to, or meet them in, any direct discussion. But he put them into his books, and this was quite a compliment, which, however unintended by him, was very undeserved by them. Besides, of what avail to show up one of these creatures in his proper light, when the country is so full of them, that they are sufficiently numerous and strong to give one another support and countenance. This, by the way, is one of the greatest evils to which our American literature is exposed. The pretender-critics are so numerous and so noisy, that it is no wonder they succeed so frequently, and for so long a time, in imposing false standards upon the several circles which look to the current press for all the supplies of literary aliment which they crave. It is a question with many on which side to

look for their authorities. With a poor people, now for the first time beginning to have a hankering after letters, nothing can be more natural than that they should turn to those who, while selling their wares at the most moderate price, are, at the same time, the most clamorous on the subject of their merits. Quack literature resorts to the same arts with quack medicine, and quacks of all sorts have been, from all times, the most pompous and presuming. They making up in mouthing what they lack in merit; in insolence what they lack in strength; and are hostile to the really honest and intellectual, in due degree with the consciousness of their own lamentable deficiencies. It did not diminish the rancour of this tribe, in regard to Mr. Cooper, that he singled out one of their number as a victim. His Mr. Editor Dodge, making some small allowances for the usual exaggerations of satire, was a very just portrait. There are many such scattered broad-cast over our country—living on its vices—its gross appetites, its base passions, and numerous irregularities; and pandering to tastes and desires, which are equally shocking to manhood and morality. The prying presumption of this person; his utter want of principle; his arrogance at one moment, and sycophancy at another; his blind allegiance to majorities; and the ignorance which keeps equal pace with, and affords at all times the happiest commentary on, his pretension,—all these characteristics were well hit off, and happily illustrated, in the example selected by Mr. Cooper. This character, as a character, has been loudly denied *vraisemblance* by all those who must have felt its truth. It is an exaggeration, certainly, but in all substantial respects it is true. The exaggerations were only such as were necessary to raise the relief, and bring out the person into that pillory sort of prominence which was desirable for the purposes of satire. But the books in which this character was made to play so notorious a part, were unwise and improper books. In writing them, Mr. Cooper proved that he was angry—in publishing them, he proved that he was unjust. The satire which was deserved by his editor, and the sarcasm which was justly due to a particular set, or entire sets, in his own neighbourhood, was a slander upon the country at large. Mr. Cooper committed the precise error which is so much the error and offence of British travellers among us,

that of confounding the commercial metropolis with the country. We protest, again and again, against the false assumption, that the city of New York is to be taken as a fair sample of the characteristics of the United States. Will Boston suffer the comparison, or Baltimore? Sure are we that there is nothing of the same local and moral influences predominating in Charleston and Savannah; and that the sturdy and simple agricultural population of our vast interior,—a sincere and manly people—generous and just—incapable of fraud and falsehood—ignorant of any of the arts by which these are made successful and maintained without discredit—that these should be supposed guilty of the rank vices and excesses, and miserable vanities, which lead to worse vices and excesses in city life, is beyond all doubt a calumny, and beyond all measure an injustice. True it is, that, in the smaller cities, a class will be found always, who, ignorant of any other means of acquiring distinction, emulate the gaudy follies of the metropolis,—and seek by queer equipage and dress—by monstrous fashions, and affectations, which discredit decency and sense,—to draw upon themselves attention. But this notice is generally contempt. The great body of the people go on their way, and smile, if scorn will let them, at the miserable vanities which betray a man into a monster,—a god into the fashion and appearance of an ape. Such persons, in all the smaller communities, are few in number, and totally without influence. They neither control in society, in morals or in politics, and live apart, keeping each other in heart and company, by that sympathy and support which they could never derive from any other quarter. Their insignificance should secure a community from any general sarcasm and discredit which their doings may have provoked.

It may be urged that Mr. Cooper had no design in "Home as Found," to make his satire general,—that his home, as found, was meant to be the small province in which his domestic gods were set up; and that his satire was purely local, instead of general. Unhappily, then, he has so managed his work, that his censure sweeps every thing before it. This is the great danger in the preparation of such works. It is difficult to say where the line is to be drawn which limits the application of the satire. One is scarcely prepared, in the first place, to believe that a man of

genius and judgment is willing to expend so much thunder on so diminutive an object. The foreigner certainly does not believe it; and for us at home, we are apprehensive that, in the hurry of Mr. Cooper's indignation, and the warmth of his anger, he confounded with his particular enemies the whole American people, and made common war against them. It is in the nature of such a mind as Mr. Cooper's to do heartily, as well as hurriedly, whatever he undertakes. He is apt to generalize too much from small beginnings. His "Travelling Bachelor" was full of proofs to this effect. That was published as "Notions of the Americans." It was very evident that the work should have been called, "Notions of the New Yorkers and New Englanders." It showed very little acquaintance with the South and West. "Homeward Bound" and "Home as Found," were no doubt true to a certain extent. We do not speak of them now as stories. We presume the author never considered them as such. They were truthful, so far as the satire was confined to certain classes and circles. They were false, so far as they were made to apply to the characteristics of the American people. It was Mr. Cooper's error to have written these books in a moment of great personal feeling—when the freshness of provocation was stirring in his mind,—when, suffering from injustice, his anger was naturally without measure. There was unquestionably much that deserved the keenest satire and the severest censure. The chief cities were diseased to an enormous extent. Their evil influences were spreading to the country. The rankness of trade and speculation had overrun the land; its vices were fast usurping the place of virtues—fraud was a bold politician, prescribing laws for the people, and matters for government, as if the propriety of his existence were no longer matter of dispute;—bankruptcy was the most profitable of all pursuits—labour was every where driven out of sight as too base for toleration; and sleight-of-hand was the great principle which determined the degrees of eminence and the rewards of service. The most dextrous was the best man, and his profits were assigned accordingly. Verily, a censor was needed; a terrible censor, dreadful in rebuke, armed with a flail of thunder, for the work of retribution. It was not in the power of an ordinary satirist to do this work. Long impunity, and constantly

increasing numbers, had made the criminals bold and reckless. They laughed at ordinary reproof, they mocked at wisdom, and despised censure. Mr. Cooper would have written in vain, as others did, but that providence works out the good of man by laws, which, however natural, are not so obvious to him in the blindness of his passion, or the greedy hurry of his avarice. A terrible punishment was preparing for the excesses of our people, —unhappily, a fate which has made the innocent pay the debts of the guilty,—which has swept all with a common besom. The laws of industry, common sense and common honesty, are not to be long outraged with impunity; and the recoil came and the retribution,—and we are—what need not be said—what we are now, and—so far as mere social prosperity is concerned—what, it is feared, we must very long remain. In morals, we trust there is improvement. God works out his purposes to this end, and he does not often work in vain. We are pleased to think, and somewhat proud to say, that, touched by adversity, scourged by the just judgments of Heaven, we are an improving people. Vice is less audacious,—pride less boastful,—labour more honourable,—truth better esteemed, if not yet wholly triumphant.

Mr. Cooper committed two errors when he wrote his satires—the one much more decided than the other. He wrote them at the wrong time, and he wrote them in the wrong spirit. Vanity listens to no homily in the full sunshine of its day. Pride hears no warning, when the homage of vulgar admiration fills its ears. Trade hearkens to no admonitions of prudence, or of principle, in the full tide of a seemingly successful speculation. Mr. Cooper wrote the books which proved so offensive to the American people, at a time when an angel from heaven would have spoken to them in vain,—when, besotted with the boldest dreams of fortune that ever diseased the imagination of avarice, they seemed to have lost the usual faculties of thought, prudence and observation—when, they appeared to think they had but to will, and *presto*, they won —to lift a finger, and, as at the wand of a magician, the waters flowed with sparkling treasures, and the sands glittered with the precious metal. The Spaniards in Peru or Mexico were never half so bedevilled with their own imaginings, as were the people of our trading cities within our recent remembrance. Our mer-

chants assumed the port of princes, and the Merchant-Princes of the Adriatic never loomed out with a more dazzling and determined ostentation.

Was it likely, that, swollen with pride, gloating over their imaginary treasures, and swaggering with the affectations of fashion, borrowed from the old fools—and young ones—of older countries, they should listen to any censor, receive any counsel, tolerate with patience any rebuke? The attempt of Mr. Cooper was unseasonable, and only vexed them. They wished praise only,—nothing more,—praise from any quarter,—they had stomachs for no stronger aliment. They had flattered the foreigner to secure this praise. They had run with headlong speed to hail the advent of English Lord and English Lady,—had spread their dinner cloths, and thrown wide their saloons and ball-rooms and theatres—asking only for praise. That their own countrymen should withhold the precious condiment—should, like the foreigner, find fault only—was an offence not to be forgiven. Nay, there was some reason for their anger. The censure of Mr. Cooper was not expressed in the right spirit. The tone of "Homeward Bound," and "Home as Found," was bad. It expressed the language of querulousness and distaste, if not disgust. It was written less in sorrow than in anger, as if the writer took a malicious delight in singling out the sore spots, which it had been the better purpose of the patriot to hide if he could not heal. He showed himself more disposed to revenge his own hurts and injuries than to amend the faults of his countrymen. Besides, as we have already said, he was unjust because too sweeping in his condemnation. This was the consequence of writing in his anger. Passion has no powers of discrimination, and the wilful mind will exercise none. But if Mr. Cooper's censure had been just in all respects, and in its entire application, it must have failed of any good result at the time of its utterance. It was unseasonable, and therefore impolitic and unwise.

We give Mr. Cooper credit for good motives in spite of this imprudence. We regard the promptings as patriotic which drove him to his task. These, no doubt, were farther stimulated by his personal feelings. But this does not alter the case. In the instance of the sanguine temperament, the personal man always

enters actively into the principles. The heart co-operates with the head, the blood impels the intellect, and hence the rare energy with which such persons commence and carry on their works. The patriotism of Mr. Cooper has always been a striking trait in his character and writings. It is conspicuous in all his performances. How fondly he dwells, even in his foreign books, while discussing their institutions, on the superiority of our own. How ready he is to do battle in their behalf. This very readiness was one of the first occasions of offence which he gave to those cold-blooded Americans, who were content to truckle abroad for their porridge, silent when their nation was openly scorned, and snatching their miserable pittance of bread and society from the very hands that were lifted in reprobation of their country. As we have already said, the Americanism of Mr. Cooper would move us to forgive him all his faults, were they twice as many. That he should come home to censure ours, was equally the proof, though an unwise one, of his honest and fearless patriotism.

Of this patriotism he has given a noble instance in his hearty and well-told history of our navy. In this book he has shown himself an equally good critic and historian. We commend him to the similar duty of preparing a select biography of our noblest naval commanders. The subject is worthy of his pen, and can no where find a better biographer. Our limits do not suffer us to remark upon his several works of foreign travel, and those tales which have succeeded them. The former laboured under the misfortune of being published long after the period when they were written,—thus, losing in their freshness, and being necessarily imperfect with regard to the existing facts,—speaking for a past and not a present time. Of the novels, "Mercedes of Castile" and the "Path-Finder," we need only say that our general remarks on the structure of Mr. Cooper's former stories, will equally apply to them. Of the "Two Admirals," we have already expressed all the opinion necessary for the reader's judgment. Neither of these works do we regard as comparable to his "Spy," "Pilot," "Mohicans," and "Pioneers." Still they are all interesting,—full of the picturesque, full of sense, and containing matters for reflection, which deserve, and will reward, the attention of any reader. We see with satisfaction that we are

soon to have another story from his pen. We are glad of this for two reasons. We always read his books with great pleasure; and we rejoice at this annunciation, as it affords another proof that the terms of relation between this favourite author and his countrymen, are becoming every day more and more grateful to the amenities, equally of patriotism and letters.

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IN

AMERICAN LITERATURE,

HISTORY AND FICTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YEMASSEE," "LIFE OF MARION," "HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
"RICHARD HURDIS," &c., &c.

SECOND SERIES.

NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

1845.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by
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VIEWS AND REVIEWS.

ARTICLE I.

DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE AMERICANS.*

We do not review this volume with any particular wish to set Mrs. Trollope right in any of her errors and misstatements. She, we are disposed to think, from the temper betrayed in her narrative, would be very loth to be deprived of the peculiar and perhaps valuable literary capital with which she enters the London market. That she scarcely goes abroad with a good conscience ; that she is not the one who travels to learn, and studies to amend—herself as well as others—need not be shown to those who undertake the perusal of her book. Its blunders might escape detection among the ignorant: her tastes and moods could scarcely be so fortunate. We confess to the absence of any charitable desire, in what we have to say, of showing her the error of her ways ;—not only because we fancy the work would be one of utter supererogation—a sheer waste of benevolence and Christian temper,—but because there might, even in a successful endeavour of the sort, be supposed a somewhat unpatriotic concession to that hostile temper, which brings us, in the shape of travellers, so many representatives annually from Great Britain, whose dislikes and prejudices are too notorious to leave it becoming in the American to meet them with other feelings than those of indifference and scorn. They do not come to form opinions, but, if possible, to confirm them—not to dissipate preju-

* Domestic Manners of the Americans. By Mrs. Trollope. London: Whittaker, Treacher & Co. New York: reprinted, 1832.

dices, but to fortify them by all that ingenuity can torture into proofs in support of antipathies which seem to be the natural result of the peculiar relationship between this and the mother country. Mrs. Trollope possesses all the virtues of this class, with some, the fruit of her personal fortunes, which are honestly her own. She carries with her all those characteristics of mood, common to the Bull family, which leaves it doubtful whether they could travel any where, into whatever country, without the too conspicuous exhibition of their horns. The mistakes of this good woman are numerous enough, but rather, we are inclined to think, the fault of her education,—which seems to have been pure Cockney, with a little more of flippancy than the usual inanity of such a training seems to require,—and not because of any perverse or malicious inclination to do mischief, or to wander from the truth. She is simply one whom previous studies and associations have left peculiarly unprepared for any comprehensive survey of her kind and kin. She is a person of quick, but vulgar intelligence ; a lively but a coarse fancy ; a shrewd thinker where her personal interests are involved, but just with that degree of shrewdness, born of the narrowest devotion to self, which opens its eyes only on the one side of the matter most agreeable, and shuts them obstinately against every thing that makes against it. With a will of her own, a frank and forward spirit, some small literary acquisitions, such as enable her to know what has been done by genius, without being a sharer or sympathizer with the sublime nature which it embodies and aims to bring into fit development, she may be considered a very clever person of her class—has a talent for coarse satire—can depict an every-day scene with considerable spirit, spicing it with malicious interpretation, and colouring it with those hues of jaundice which alone can make an American landscape tolerable to a British eye ; and, altogether, she can manufacture a volume for the press, which, like the present, shall have a run, and by its vivacity, its lively satire, and its very coarseness, find readers whom it will amuse even among those who are most slandered in its pages. Such is her talent, and such the temper in which she employs it in her comments upon the manners of the Americans. It does not appear that she has any misgivings that she is not al-

ways right. Her mind is too eager, too masculine, too little scrupulous for that. But, with a sort of modesty which is purely conventional, she begs us to make this reservation in her favor. It is possible that she may have erred here and there in her progress —she may have jumped to the wrong conclusions. This is possible—barely possible; and she begs us, occasionally, as we advance, to ascribe all such inaccuracies to the simple and single defect of vision, mental or physical. She goes even farther, and is assiduously urgent—in the hearing of her company, at least—in discarding from her speech all shows of those preferences and prejudices, whether of birthplace or of education, which she seems sometimes disposed to admit, may have the effect, even in a British eye, of giving their own hues and aspects to many of the objects of foreign survey and speculation. This, too, is a very British practice. Most of the English travellers, about to set forth for other countries, begin by telling you how utterly free they have made themselves from all prejudices. Believe them, and they have put off the training, the impressions, the modes of thinking and feeling, natural to a long life, with as much coolness and ease as if they were so many worn-out and unfashionable garments. Some of them, the better to secure confidence in the veracity of their representations, in regard to America, go so far as to insist upon their own pure democracy while at home; of which (their blessings be to Providence for the revelation which unseals their eyes!) their experience of democracy, as shown by its workings in America, has had the effect of curing them forever. It does not strike us that the good woman who writes this book ventures upon a farce quite so broad as this; but she requires us to confide in assurances that are substantially quite as absurd, since this divesting ourselves of the prejudices of a life, when setting forth among strangers, is a moral impossibility. It is just at such a time that the prejudices of home and early training become stronger than ever. The mind studiously brings them forward in resistance and actual opposition to the novel aspects of society—the novel assaults of opinion which it is always destined, in foreign places, to encounter; and the traveller becomes more and more solicitous to maintain his preconceived opinions in proportion to his own individuality and the degree of self-esteem which distinguishes

his mental organization. Mrs. Trollope is one of the most stubborn of this description. Her self-esteem, modified by her sex into a quality not less active and influential because less dogged and obtrusive, is perhaps more subtle because of this very modification; and it makes its appearance in all her wanderings, whatever may be the scene, and no matter who may be the parties to the action. We are sorry, for her sake, that such is the case; since the just mind is but poorly compensated by the success of its labours, and the approbation of those to whom they are addressed, if disturbed by a solitary doubt of the perfect truth of those statements by which wrong may be done to others. We are not unwilling, as an offset to this disturbing doubt, that she should enjoy the full benefit of those reservations to which she begs our attention. We are not unwilling to suppose that her errors have been the fruit of her blindness rather than her wilfulness; that she has wandered from the truth even when she strove to find it, and that she has honestly striven to banish from her heart the vexations and the antipathies which it is but too certain that she very strongly felt. With these reservations clearly made and understood, we proceed to the examination of her volume, which, if it has not, to employ the language of the writer in regard to the reception among us of the book of Basil Hall, of a similar order, been productive of a moral earthquake, has, nevertheless, to the infinite amusement of the well-informed persons of the country, occasioned much distress among many of that thin-skinned gentry, the journalists. If it be the subject of any gratification to Mrs. Trollope, as doubtless it will, to know that she has fully succeeded in stirring up the bile of this honorable class, she may felicitate herself thereupon with all the pride and triumph of an Englishwoman. It is, indeed, the chief objection to the reprint before us, that it has been thought proper, by the American publishers, to preface it with an introduction, conceived in a peevish and fretful spirit, and altogether written in very puerile taste. The irony is not always perceptible, and is calculated immediately to provoke the sneer and sarcasm which it would seem to have been the devout desire of the writer to avert.

The travels of Mrs. Trollope have been neither very various nor very wide. Indeed she has merely skirted a small frontier

of our country, in its least cultivated and settled parts; and, if we except a few weeks passed in some of the eastern and middle regions, can scarcely be said to have been in it at all. She entered the Mississippi at New Orleans—made a pause of some seventy hours in that city—sympathized with a little negro, who, though a slave, appeared to be most unreasonably contented and happy—became acquainted with a milliner, and, through her, with a venerable gentleman of the New-Harmony faith, who dealt freely in maxims, "wise saws and modern instances;" and, thus prepared and provided with this amount and specimen of New Orleans society, took her departure. To a lady of her tact and talent, this glimpse of three days was enough, undoubtedly, to enable her to know all that was to be known, and to speak confidently and freely upon the characters, manners, and conditions of the place; and, accordingly, with the aid of a steamboat traveller, who happily fell in with her on her departure from Orleans, she details to us something of those distinctions which make the various classes of its society. She speaks with sovereign contempt of the creole aristocracy, who, it seems, have the audacity to give "grand dinners and dine together," and commiserates the fate of the "beautiful and amiable quadroons," who are not admitted even to a glimpse of the secret doings of this ultra aristocracy;—yet, strange to say, who are silly enough to be satisfied and even pleased with their own condition, subject to a privation so very humiliating as is this. Mrs. Trollope's own facts betray the impertinence of all her opinions in regard to New Orleans. She herself sees nothing. What she dilates upon is second-hand matter, obtained from a stranger whom she picks up in a packet on the Mississippi. Who is this stranger? The absurdity of quoting the anonymous, unless in connection with other and less questionable authorities, calls for no remark; but we may venture one or more of a general description which will afford a key to these statements, which will materially assist the reader to a correct judgment. The creole population of New Orleans is the native population. The word *creole* signifies *native*. These natives are of French and Spanish origin chiefly—the greater number being French. These people, at the time of Mrs. Trollope's visit, constituted an exclusive class

for many reasons. They were particularly jealous of the Anglo-American population of the Eastern States. These were generally tradesmen—adventurers who devoted themselves to the interests of trade—who brought no society with them, and, with comparatively few exceptions, had enjoyed, in their training, none of the advantages of good society. They were bold and adventurous in business,—eager at gain,—acute in the highest degree, with the natural shrewdness of the Anglo-Saxon race, sharpened by the necessities of a new condition and in a strange place—forward in their manners,—wanting grievously in the polish of conversation, and, what with their energy and hardihood,—their rudeness and successful prosecution of business,—as unlike the French creole as one social being could well be unlike another. The latter was courtly in his manners, nice in his tastes, a sluggard in his labours, fond of fashion, frivolous perhaps,—taking his tone from Paris, and looking with scorn and dislike upon the "rough and tumble" intruders, by whom, with the instincts of the lymphatic nature, he felt that he was destined to be thrust aside, his 'occupation' usurped, and his high places taken from his possession. The antagonist nature of the churches in which the parties separately worshipped, constituted another wall and barrier between the two, over which it was not easy for either party to pass. The fellow traveller from whom Mrs. Trollope derived her facts, might well speak indignantly of this creole aristocracy. We know that, at this period, nothing was more common than such language. Denied to enter the circle of the local aristocracy, which, because of its deficient energies, the intruder was apt to despise, the latter was only too well prepared to believe in any statement which disparaged their pretensions. Of their duelling, their gambling, their cruelties, and debaucheries, he made a very copious, if not a very charitable collection; and, in his own denial and vexation of heart, without considering the wrong which he thus inflicted on the reputation of one portion, at least, of the common country, he regaled the ears of all the Trollopes that would listen to his tales. With some truth, he mingled much falsehood, and his detailed instances were gladly received as histories, inclusive of a people, when they were only solitary cases and exceptions.

The "Quadroons" are persons of mixed colour, of illegitimate birth, and constitute in New Orleans a class, which exists, precisely to the same extent in other cities, except that, in these, they are indiscriminately borrowed from the community at large. To speak of their exclusion from the higher circles of society in New Orleans, with the indignation which Mrs. Trollope uses on the present occasion, is just as absurd as it would be to complain that the New York fashionables object to the obtrusion of the people of the Five Points into their drawing-rooms, or in London that the women of the pavè were denied entrance to Almacks and other fashionable places. If our good Englishwoman had not set out with a vexatious idea that in America there should be but one class—that it was quite an impertinence in an American to presume upon any exclusiveness, the absurdity of her complaint, in this instance, would have needed no answer to expose it. She devotes not quite a chapter to New Orleans, and, for the materials in her possession, of her own acquisition, upon which she could rely, she need not have given it a single page. Her narrative here is filled with her own speculations, generally absurd enough, upon what she sees and what she hears. She gets the surface of a fact, without looking for its sides, or depth, or weight. In fact, knowing how to talk only, she never seems to have learned the first duty of a traveller—how to observe. She seeks only just enough of a truth, upon which to found a disquisition. Some of her peculiar hostility to the creole aristocracy of New Orleans, and of her sympathy for the denied but still very happy quadroons, may be ascribed to the fact which here escapes her for the first time, that her companion from Europe, was the somewhat celebrated Frances Wright, (Madame D'Arusmont.) With the peculiar notions of Miss Wright, particularly in regard to marriage, and the rights and privileges of the sex, it will not be difficult to see why the quadroons should rise into objects of such special commiseration in the mind of our traveller. But, until Miss Wright shall succeed in effecting the reforms for which she has been so long struggling, with a talent and energy worthy of a better object, we must be permitted to think that Mrs. Trollope's sympathy is entirely thrown away, and would be much more appropriate, if yielded to the wretched outcasts, thousands in number, doomed

to a condition of which no class in our country has the smallest conception, among the sinks and stews of London.

The objects of Miss Wright seem to have been wholly baffled and finally abandoned,—still treasured in her fancy and her memory, as some precious moral problem, to be solved by future experiment, based upon the philosophies which she so vainly strove to teach. Whether her schemes, generally, were of good or evil import to society, it is not in our province just now to discuss them. Of the peculiar objects which Miss Wright had in view, in coming to this country, Mrs. Trollope gives us the following account, in which she appears only as an amiable enthusiast, led away by a warm, zealous and humane heart, which lacked nothing but a modest and calmly-judging mind, by which to regulate its eccentricities.

"Instead of becoming a public orator in every town throughout America, she was about, as she said, to seclude herself for life in the deepest forest of the western world, that her time, her fortune, and her talents might be exclusively devoted to aid the cause of the suffering Africans. Her first object was to show that nature had made no difference between blacks and whites, excepting in complexion; and this she expected to prove by giving an education perfectly equal to a class of black and white children. Could this fact be once fully established, she conceived that the negro cause would stand on firmer ground than it had yet done, and the degraded rank which they have ever held among civilized nations would be proved to be a gross injustice. This question of the mental equality or inequality between us and the negro race, is one of great interest, and has never yet been fairly tried; and I expected for my children and myself both pleasure and information from visiting her establishment, and watching the success of her experiment."—pp. 33, 4.

The history of Miss Wright, while in America, is already in the possession of our readers; and this wild scheme, sanctioned as it is by an unfeigned if not a proper philanthropy, is well known to have shared the fortune of all her innovations upon the order of established things. Of course such an experiment could not properly be made in this country. To put it on a fair footing, it would have been essential, as a first step, that the teacher should have chosen a section of the world, utterly ignorant of the distinctions which all civilized society has thought it proper to make between members of the human family, so divided and set apart by distinctions not only visible, but imposing and impressive,

as the difference of colour. While in contact, a sense of relative superiority and inferiority would be forever active with both classes, forcing the one, whether so disposed or not, into the attitude of the master, and subduing the other, in spite of every effort on his own part, into the condition of the slave, or, at all events, into that of a degraded caste. The instincts of the inferior, even if colour were not an absolute badge and bond of difference, would of themselves subject him to the mastery of the dominant intellect, and the nature more vigorous and more bent on conquest than his own. But we shall not pursue a topic which is scarcely legitimate in the condition of public opinion in our country. The subject is one which, if not utterly beyond the reach of experiment, seems not likely to have its aspects materially altered by anything that can be done with it; and we prefer, in a case about which so many doubts prevail, and upon which such mighty destinies depend, not to disturb it by speculations which can not well be profitable and may be hurtful. Where so much is at stake, and where there is such diversity of opinion, the wise man will prefer to remain silent in waiting for the superior intelligence, which never fails to be vouchsafed for the uses of mankind, whenever the absolute need of humanity shall render the dispensation proper.

From New Orleans, our traveller proceeds to Memphis. The steamboats on the Mississippi are probably the noblest in the world, in point of size, speed, finish and proportion. They are, indeed, so many floating palaces. But even a floating palace in America will not satisfy Mrs. Trollope,—no,—not even when its peculiarities indicate the higher civilization of the people. The fact that the spirit of accommodation in America, goes so far as to furnish separate cabins for the ladies and the gentlemen, is offensive in her eyes. This division of the sitting and sleeping apartments of the sexes, is an arrangement which the English lady does not seem willing to approve. Ordinarily, the English accusation against us is, that we are too much given to living in common—that there is no security from intrusion—that no place is sacred from vulgarity, and no person, whatever his tastes, can be safe from the impertinence of his neighbour. Here is an exception which proves not less offensive to the stranger. Mrs. Trol-

lope dislikes the stiffness and formality of the thing. The popular manners lack freedom in consequence of this barrier; and, insisting upon finding and forming society wherever she goes,—even in a steamboat which brings from distant quarters crowds of the most dissimilar people in the world—the great fondness of this lady for perfect flexibility of mood and manner—a notion caught in all probability from the great social projector, her companion—our excellent English lady proceeds to do what she can to set the simple Americans right in their frigid notions of what is proper. But she finds the gentlemen somewhat unwilling to fall into her way of thinking. They insist somewhat too tenaciously upon the exclusive possession of their quarters. It is not permitted to them to penetrate the apartment yielded to the other sex, and Mrs. Trollope, for this very reason, passes into theirs. Here she finds them in all attitudes,—heels in air, perhaps,—some smoking, some chewing,—all at ease, and possibly some in *dishabille*. It is not possible to maintain her ground, however much she hankers after her male companions, when it is very evident that these really do not desire her presence. There are moments, we can assure Mrs. Trollope, when the most devoted lover of the sex would scarcely desire their visits. The fact seems but slowly to have reached the sensorium of our traveller. She leaves the ground reluctantly, but not before she has satisfied all on board that she is a legitimate member of the Pry family. Nothing seems to have escaped her search. She has pressed into forbidden places —pried and peered into cranny and crevice, to the great confusion, no doubt, of the occupants—

"Peep'd in the baths, and God knows where beside,"

and, in all probability, has been taught in plain terms, by some of the sturdy Kentuckians or Tennesseans, that a lady, though curious and eager after knowledge, and an Englishwoman, must really not expect to thrust her nose everywhere. Mrs. Trollope does not relish this plain speaking, and her book is swollen accordingly by a peevish and querulous complaining. It is uncourteous indifference here, and repelling coldness there, and absolute rudeness and denial, and some shocking impertinences, which, we may assume to have grown out of her resolute purpose to violate all

the existing forms of society where she found herself, as if there was nothing which she might not slight or despise among a people, whom she set out to believe no better than barbarians. Without heeding the necessary forms of introduction—forms of which no people are more tenacious than the English,—she makes her acquaintance wherever she goes,—compels acquaintance—and, as a next step, natural enough from such a beginning, she institutes a rigorous inquiry into concerns and customs which are commonly held private and domestic. But she is not all, nor always wrong in what she says and sees. We must, in some cases, admit the justice of her censure. It is on this route, on board this boat from New Orleans to Memphis, that she remarks, with a severity but too strictly proportioned to its justice, upon the habit of tobacco chewing, so vile and so general among us. Her language here is not too strong. Her censure not overstrained nor undeserved. She speaks little more than the truth, with an exaggeration (if any) of which we have nothing to complain, of the gross indifference to decency, which is manifested by so many thousands of our people, who should know better, in voiding their offensive juices without regard to propriety or place. On this subject Mrs. Trollope has our thanks, and well deserves the hearing of our people. If her rebukes shall have any effect (which we doubt) in lessening the number of those, accursed and cursing, who have yielded themselves up to this noxious indulgence, we shall gladly forgive her all the follies and the falsehoods of her volume. Her sarcasms on this filthy subject run all through her book, and are properly conceived and generally well written. We cannot complain that she herself finds as much seeming pleasure in the ungrateful topic, as those do in the filthy weed who are the subjects of her censure. We quote from these numerous instances but a single specimen, not so much to illustrate her mode of treating this subject, as because it affords us an opportunity of indicating one of the most fruitful sources of error in the European who travels in this country.

"I hardly know any annoyance so deeply repugnant to English feelings as the incessant, remorseless spitting of Americans. I feel that I owe my readers an apology for the repeated use of this, and several other odious words; but I cannot avoid them, without suffering the fidelity of description to escape me.

It is possible that in this phrase 'Americans,' I may be too general. The United States form a continent of almost distinct nations, and I must now and always be understood to speak only of that portion of them which I have seen. In conversing with Americans, I have constantly found that if I alluded to any thing which they thought I considered as uncouth, they would assure me it was local and not national; the accidental peculiarity of a very small part, and by no means a specimen of the whole," &c.—pp. 34, 5.

Dismissing the disgusting subject which is the burden of the preceding paragraph, with a sense of loathing at its associations quite as decided as that which the good lady herself expresses,—we proceed to direct the reader's attention to the fact, that Mrs. Trollope herself is compelled occasionally to acknowledge certain misgivings that she may have generalized too extensively in her descriptions;—that, in short, she has had her fears that these descriptions are not wholly given to a native population in America, and that they certainly do not indicate that population from which our nation is to derive its character. Whether it be an effort of conscientiousness, or simply that she does now and then perceive a glimmering of the latent truth for which, it is very certain, that she never seriously looks,—it is very clear, by this and other paragraphs similarly slight and brief, scattered throughout the volume,—that she herself is made to entertain some doubts, or some shows of doubt, that the American people are not legitimately represented by her chewing and spitting companions on the Mississippi. It is our regret, for her sake at least, that she so soon forgets all her conscientiousness and caution, and, beguiled by the malicious passion for the satirical, which proves so large an element in her genius,—or well aware how gratefully received is all this species of writing among her countrymen, where the United States is the victim,—she waives all her reservations on the score of her limited experience, and does her best to make it appear that the minds and morals of a numerous people,—the descendants of British loins,—achieving with British vigour wherever they go,—throwing off British supremacy, and defying her at periods when she mocked the powers of all other nations—that the impelling moral of such a people is properly indicated by the rude borderer who gropes for new tracks in the unknown wilderness—by the wild boatman of a frontier river—

or the drunken ditcher in some remote canal of the interior, who, in most, if not in all cases, is a faithful scion of British growth—a foreigner at all events—and just as likely as not, to have gathered his first lesson of propriety and purity in her own exclusively temperate and grateful regions of Wapping and the Strand. The conjecture is a vastly probable one in ninety-nine of the hundred cases, where the physical labourer is the object of consideration in America. It is the misfortune of the American people—the native population be it understood—that they skulk the more heavy tasks of the soil. The grosser labour of the country, devolves, in great degree, upon the foreigner. The Yankee has too much genius for drudging. He is usually adroit enough to shift this to other shoulders than his own. He is a lawyer, a doctor, a divine, a manufacturer, a merchant, a builder, a schemer, a pedlar,—never a ditcher or a drudge. He will invent a thousand machines sooner than toil; and, place him in connection with a thousand Englishmen, in a moment of emergency, and, ten to one, you will see him directing the toils of all the rest, according nothing but his *surveillance* to the common necessity. This is his art. He is a genius. It is his subject, not himself, that Mrs. Trollope beholds waist deep in the mud and mire of the western canals—it is the drudge that he has summoned from other parts of the world to do those offices for his people, to which they feel themselves superior. That portion of the spitting and the blackguardism which is done by him—offensive enough, we confess, to decency and common sense—is yet but a small portion of that which she beholds; and the wallow in which she sees the creature whose habits and manners thus compel her loathing, is but the sink and sewer through which the evil humours of the country are suffered to pass off. It was this good lady's misfortune,—possibly the result of her peculiar tastes,—to have confined herself to the back parts of his establishment, instead of seeking him in his parlour, and at the proper entrance where company is expected.

We do not propose, step by step, to pursue the route which was taken by this worthy woman. Her course is easily indicated, and the merest glance at the map will satisfy any one, however little familiar with our geography, how very small,

comparatively speaking, are the portions of the country which she has deigned to visit. It will be seen, by one at all familiar with our history, who condescends to examine hers, that the greater part of the three years which she wasted within our limits, was employed in going to and fro, in and about a region, which, until the last twenty years, gave little or no sign of civilization—was partly in possession and under the controul of the Indians, and was, up to the period when she wrote and travelled, almost as little known to the natives of the country, as to Mrs. Trollope herself. We have already glanced at the heterogeneous condition of society at large in New Orleans. The habits of two foreign people were there for a long period in absolute conflict. Manners and customs of a kind singularly grateful to the tastes, were to be found everywhere among the creole communities; but these, according to Mrs. Trollope's own confession, she was not permitted to penetrate. Nor was she more able, than were the native Louisianians willing, to do justice to the intelligence and enterprise of the Anglo-American population, which crowded there for business. A better knowledge of the mutual claims of the two parties—the inevitable intimacies which must follow absolute and daily contact in business—these have led to the overthrow of many barriers, which were as injurious to the interests of the country as they were to civilization. The discontents and disaffected of Louisiana, among the creoles, which, in the war of 1815, forced upon Jackson the necessity of imposing martial law upon New Orleans, were really due to the social prejudices of the one class vexed at the intrusive energies of the other. Besides, allowances were to be made in regard to the freshness of the transaction with Napoleon, by which the people of the then French colony, were suddenly transferred to the control of a race against which it had been the constant policy of Napoleon to encourage the most fervid hostility and dislike.

Ohio, which Mrs. Trollope made her resting place, was ceded as a derelict territory as late as the year 1789 by the several states of Virginia and the Carolinas, by whose people it was obtained by conquest from the Indians. It was formed into a state in 1802; receiving, as a matter of course, as is the universal history, not only here, but in every country in the world, for its

first population, the hardy, the reckless, and the profligate—the baffled and the denied elsewhere—the outcast, the outlaw, and the adventurous—it matters not from what or any cause—his crimes, his necessities, or simply his caprice and mood. For twenty years after the purchase of Louisiana, the great Mississippi valley was the favourite thoroughfare, the refuge, and the hiding place for all the discontents of Europe. Much of the country has been settled by the destitute myriads of foreigners who are ingrate and foolish enough, if we are to believe this lady, annually to fly from the fine feelings, the fertility, and the fashions of their European dwellings,—preferring plenty, ease, and independence, on the Ohio and the Mississippi, though coupled with rudeness of speech, and uncouth manners, to a condition which, whatever may be its attractions, must certainly have had its drawbacks and disqualifications also. Many of its peculiar features are decidedly foreign,—and we have more than once been amused with the complaint of our lady-traveller, uttered in reproof of some custom decidedly European in its origin, and, in all probability, a direct importation from her own country. Our English, in particular, are apt to insist upon provincialisms in America, which, if they were more familiar with their own language, they would find written on some of its noblest pages. A little study of the old English drama would suffice to open the eyes and shut the mouths of many a bullheaded traveller, who fancies that the atmosphere of the fast-anchored isle, entitles him when he goes abroad to presume upon the airs of one having universal knowledge. We might bestow, by means of Greene, Peele, Marlowe, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, some useful lessons, in their own language, upon such truly conceited and inflated persons as come out among us in the guise of British sea-captains, and honourable colonels of the army, whose valour we have no question, (it certainly is to be hoped,) will always be found more ready than their wit. Where the censured and supposed peculiarity is not foreign, not drawn from Great Britain or the Continent,—where the *squatter* is the poor defeated adventurer from another and a neighbouring state, driven out into the wilderness by excess, by poverty or crime, and seeking that obscurity in the kindred glooms of the wilderness, which his ill

habits or ill fortunes have denied that he shall find in that he flies,—the race thus formed is one, *sui generis*, for which the United States are as little responsible as civilization itself. It is indeed the civilization of the country which has placed him where he is, in a sort of exile,—justly suited to his nature, and causing the development of all his faculties of usefulness. Here, his wild temper finds appropriate exercise; and, in rude conflict with the savage necessities of the forest, he prepares the wild realm which he penetrates, for a gentler people. He is not the only person whom Mrs. Trollope met in our mighty forests, though she shows a genuine British reluctance in acknowledging the claims of a better;—which, however, she is occasionally compelled to do. The *squatter* is followed by a noble class, who soon improve the *morale* of the land of which they take possession. These are the hardy settlers of the west,—the real population,—whom the philosopher, aye, and the simply honest man, would delight to encounter among any people, with a hearty love and veneration. Had Mrs. Trollope not been blinded by her national bigotries, she would scarcely have seen the miserable wretch whom she lingers to delineate, while beholding the more manly and useful race, which followed upon his footsteps. These are the men who, taking the axe on the shoulder, with a spirit of adventure which, at this day, we are proud to say, is almost entirely American, have gone cheerily, with a song of hope and courage, into the venerable forests, undiscouraged by their repelling silence,—by the wild beasts, and the wilder savages that fill them—unrepining at the fortune that calls for these privations, and demands these perils—and, striking their resolute shafts deeply in wilderness and mountain, who have torn from the bosom of the soil, countless proofs of its own wealth and their industry and valour;—thus affording to the world a pledge, the surest that a people can ever make to the race from which they spring, and the government which protects them, of an energy, an ability and patriotism, which as certainly will make them great, as it has made them independent. It is of a people, such as these, that Mrs. Trollope makes merry because they are uninformed in the trim and petty conventionalities of the great foreign cities, of which she affects so much the spirit and the tone, and in which, by the

way, her own manners and spirit would show her to be an intruder only. It is to this class, in a spirit of rebuke and ridicule, which finds its true and sufficient commentary in the present condition of her own country and its population, that this refined lady so violently objects. She can see nothing in the bold daring —the firm courage—the strong nerve—the cheerful industry—the perseverance and tenacity of this people, triumphing, as they do, over the almost inaccessible bulwarks of nature. No nation ever came to its birthright through a more perilous time of trial, than did the United States; and when she shall be reproached with what is left undone, in the perfecting of her institutions, or the amending of her morals or her manners, her sons will have made a reply, more than sufficient, if estimated comparatively with the deeds of any other nation, in pointing to what she has done in the teeth of poverty, and the oppressions and privations of two protracted wars with a nation whom we are still pleased, in our humility, to style by the endearing appellative of mother—but whose "boon and birthgift were the stepdame's curse:"—a nation which first drove our ancestors from her arms, then sought them out, with the unrelenting ferocity of the wolf, even in the wilderness to which she had exiled them. It is not enough, in the view of Mrs Trollope, that, under a fate such as ours, we have been enabled to do so much. It is not enough that we have built the cottage;—we have not yet taught the wild vine to gather and to gad around it. Life is without its city decorations on the Ohio. Society lacks the finish of the old world on the banks of the Mississippi. The fine arts have not yet deigned to hang their trophies on the clay walls of the borderer. Music stirs not his vallies in the depth and silence of the midnight. The gay masquer, the giddy trifler, the voluptuous dancing girl,—these crowd not yet to the forest dwelling of the bee and the bear-hunter. The gaiety and the glitter are yet to come. Life for him wears still the aspect of a stern necessity. He is yet to strive and struggle. The warfare of his race is but begun. Doubtless he will have his triumph. He will wear his trophies. He will enjoy his repose, and this will be followed by his luxuries. Mrs. Trollope, however, cannot wait for these. She is an impatient lady. She must have them now. What he has, and

what he has done already, in his condition, are of no import in her eyes. Her selfish desires are not friendly to right seeing, and to justice. She hungers and thirsts, and will not philosophize. She cannot. She has appetites to be pacified, and morbid tastes to be indulged, and is plethoric and fat like Hamlet—'scant of breath'—and the coarse fare that Jonathan proffers, and the crazy vehicles which he offers for her use, and the villainous rough roads over which she must go, and the simple steamboat society which she finds,—these, as they combine to keep the sense of English self uppermost at every movement of her mind and body, render her sensible to discomforts only. In this condition of mood, shall we wonder, that, in our lady-traveller's eyes, all the toils, all the achievements, all the triumphs of infant America, go absolutely for nothing.

From Memphis Mrs. Trollope proceeds to Cincinnati. She touches, *en route*, at various places upon the rivers Ohio and Mississippi. She sees pretty much what travellers may look to see along the rivers of every newly-settled country—nothing remarkable, perhaps, unless in the mood that makes it so. It may be admitted, that the pictures which she gives us of the miserable condition of certain of the settlers along this region are natural and true enough. Of this something has been said before. We have already indicated the sort of persons usually found in the condition she describes. The wretched life thus followed is a conclusive proof of the utter worthlessness of the individual who pursues it; for such is the facility with which the means of life may be procured in any part of the United States, that no citizen, who pleases, need be left without employment, at once easy, honest, and profitable. The mistake which Mrs. Trollope makes in her delineations—a mistake which may be readily made by one who seeks only to make a case against the country—is in so hastily seizing upon the fortunes of the single individual or family, and making this the standard and sample of the people of the region. As well might the American in England, with like temper and truth, from the stews of London, produce and set up the model and draw the character of that nation in whose happy limits our excellent lady writer never seems to have heard of anything amiss—never a word of boxing and bruising, of blackened eyes and faces—faces

in the image of God, battered out of all shape of humanity by mauls of flesh and blood—flesh and blood looking on, thousands in number, men and women—looking on with delight, refreshed by these rare proofs of British blood, if not of its sensibility. Her ears have never been outraged at home by such narratives, her eyes never been shocked by such exhibitions. She has not heard of mobs and individual ruffians that terrify the citizens and need the military; nor of crimes that require a penal code more sanguinary than that of Draco; criminals, of whom a single item will suffice, in the recognized existence of a class in London alone, who, as the statistical writers of that region assert, are at least five thousand in number, and who would cut one's throat for a shilling. If she had ever heard of this woful history, of the squalid poverty, the ill manners, the brutal licentiousness which her own historians tell of this otherwise blessed region, she might have suddenly recalled it to memory while in the border and forest country of America, and spared the exhibitions of a mood and temper which, with such histories in view, are surely to her shame. But, assuming her ignorance—and really it is surprising how largely the beams may grow in one's own eyes while plucking the motes from those of other people—and we must not wonder that she is startled and shocked, in the wilderness of a new world, by the boorishness of those men who are unwilling that strange women should enter their chambers while yet in their *dishabille*, and before the beds are quite made up;—and by the mock modesty of those damsels who are not anxious to talk about the petticoats which they are yet content to wear. Had she but been at the pains to assure Jonathan that in Paris nothing was more common, among the fashionables, at least, than that the chambers should be free to either party, at particular hours of the morning, and that the gentle cavalier might be frequently found officiating as a lady's maid, lacing her bodice, and otherwise disposing of her dress, he probably might not have been so tenacious of his own cabin on the steamboat. A like statement, to the young rustic damsel of the Ohio, suffering her to see what choice privileges were accorded to her sex in other countries, might, in like manner, have effected a large reform in respect to that *mauvaise honte* which the more knowing lady found so distressing; but whether Jonathan the

Rude, or his simple daughter, would have been really improved by the changes in their primitive condition, let the chronicles of *crim. con.* in the older countries answer.

Mrs. Trollope is sometimes pathetic. She has some of the endowments of the artist. She has invention. She can combine and compare. She has fancy. She can embellish. Her skill in grouping is not small, and she excels in generalization. Sometimes, too, she can individualize with quite a felicitous pencil; always understanding that, in such cases, her imagination lends rare succour when the actual in her subject fails. Some of her pictures of this sort are quite ravishing; and, were she content to leave them as pictures—isolated, rare and remarkable instances, curious even where she finds them, and put on record, conspicuously displayed, for this very reason,—we certainly should find no fault with her for portraiture. One of these is that of a Mississippi wood-cutter. A woful subject, surely, and woful is the picture made of it. The text of our traveller is illustrated by a rude engraving from the drawing on the spot of a male companion of the lady, a Frenchman of talent named Hervieu. Both delineations are correct. We ourselves have beheld such a group; have gazed upon such wretched conditions of humanity. The parties here represent a class. Separated from society, without motive to endeavour, living miserably, in comparative idleness, breeding and rearing their young,—for, possibly, a like destiny with their own,—sickly, half-starved always, and deriving their petty gains, and satisfying their wretched wants, by furnishing the passing steamer with her fuel—we behold a sample of our human kindred from which we turn in loathing and dismay. It is the penalty of vice and indolence to be thus destitute and desolate; and people of this description, who incur this penalty, naturally—for they must live somehow—sink into such subordinate situations, such as are necessary to the human family,—that even those whom they serve, turn away from their presence with revolting. But the class is not a large one in America. The groups occur at long intervals along the waste of river and forest, and every year lessens their number with the advance of an active population. The children, thus reared, finally break away from the connexion, as, with the impulses of youth still ac-

tive, and, with the progress which they make in the knowledge of other uses to which they may put themselves, in contact with the world, they perceive openings to more profitable employments; and those who are found continuing a life so wretched as the text describes, are generally persons beyond middle age, of impaired strength and courage, and with habits of indolence or drunkenness, so inflexible, that no influence can possibly lift them into exertion and hope. Could Mrs. Trollope, while she drew this picture, have turned her eyes to the collieries of Great Britain, and beheld the misery of those drear abodes—could she have read that woful history of man, woman, and tender infant, hopelessly doomed to the vilest and most unremitting labour, in cells and caverns as fatal to youth, health, strength, and happiness, as ever human society invented for its worst criminals, she would have seen in the condition of the Mississippi woodman, a fate which the worker in a British coal-mine would gaze upon with envy, rather than commiseration. She would have torn her picture, or have coupled it with the parallel portraiture which we thus hint to her to supply. At all events, she would have spared the effort to confound the country with its profligates and destitutes, assured of this, that a condition, however low or wretched, being necessary or unavoidable to every nation, it is so ordered that there shall be persons by whom such a condition will naturally be filled. It may safely be said of the United States, that, in comparison with other nations, and in proportion with its own population, it possesses few conditions of a character so degrading, and a small number of persons prepared to enter upon their tasks.

Of the three years which Mrs. Trollope passed in our country, nearly two of them were spent in Cincinnati. In all this period she never beheld a beggar; and this little fact, which of itself speaks volumes for the nation of which it is written, not only fails to elicit from this very partial narrator the applause for our policy and people which any spirit less jaundiced than hers would most certainly have expressed, but actually, by a tortuous exercise of ingenuity, furnishes her with an occasion to sneer at our deficiencies in other matters. The absence of the arts and sciences among us, of literature and amusements—gratuitously asserted, by the

way—she avers, with a most strange philosophy, to result entirely from the national distaste to beggary—a feeling, in turn, solely attributable to the *auri sacra fames*, the vile and besetting sin, even before tobacco-chewing, according to her estimate, of Americanism. The very industry of the people—their anxiety for independence and social comfort—is thus made an argument against them; and that very condition of things for which the British people are now sighing, if not absolutely struggling, is described, to this same people, as far less necessary and grateful than the absolute poverty and destitution, crime and misery, which, in their own and in every country, must be the certain result of the many living and labouring only for the ease, the luxuries and refinements of the few: in other words, not labouring wholly for themselves, as is the rare privilege which American democracy accords to our people. To labour for self, is, after all, the only way to acquire the means of luxury. However degrading the passion for wealth, considered without reference to its uses, it will be found in the end to have its uses, precisely in this manner, in the attainment of the refining and the social arts. Those in America, whose aims go no farther than the acquisition of money, and the attainment of the creature comforts, are really very few. The ambition of our people is very far superior to this. The struggle is for the one agent which brings the rest. This is granted. But the American hoards nothing: he rather wastes. He builds; he buys. He makes a show. He is fond of parade. He is ostentatious. He is too British not to love to enjoy himself; and he passes with great rapidity from one source of enjoyment to another. He pulls down one house to put up a better and a bigger. He furnishes it only too frequently. He must see company, and he stores wine. Anon, his daughters have a piano, and you soon find a picture on his walls. The taste which is affected at first, is unfeigned with a second generation; and two or three admirable sculptors and painters whom America has already sent to Europe from the banks of the Ohio, are proofs illustrative of this history. But, to reach this condition, the necessities and the comforts must first be won. Mrs. Trollope is but little of the philosopher, nay, she is but little of the observer, if she has not seen that this is the inevitable course in the history of every nation. A people, wanting bread,

will listen to no poetry, however fine—will look at no picture, though from the hands of Titian or Claude Lorraine. If you would understand what America should be at this moment, you must compare her people with the working-classes and not the aristocracy of Europe. This is the only safe and just comparison. Compare the character and condition of the British labouring and trading classes, and the people of America at large, who are, all of them, workingmen in a greater or less degree. Properly, we have no aristocracy. A few old families, whose pride of character has survived their means, are to be found in all the old States; whose tastes, whose bearing, and general resources of intellect and accomplishment, will compare favourably with any community in any portion of the world; and these tacitly influence the masses around them, to a small extent, precisely (though not in the same way nor in the same degree) as, in Europe, the masses are influenced by a nobility at once set above them by the resources of wealth and the authority of law. Our military distinctions, which some European travellers regard as constituting a sort of aristocracy, have become, among ourselves, because of their frequency, rather objects of ridicule than reverence. A citizen preserves his title after leaving office, not because it is matter of distinction, but simply because of the habit which his neighbours have formed of approaching him through its medium. With the great body of the people—though our simplicity of carriage is not what it was in the days of Franklin—it is yet ridiculously frank, unaffected, and seemingly rude in the eyes of those who are accustomed to the slavish deference of the European masses to all superiority. We see but little luxury;* our refinements are not much beyond a love of decorum and cleanliness: we know nothing of the artifices and ultra-graces of a long standing conventional arrangement among old families possessed of immense wealth: we have no glorious pictures, no cultivated scenes, no marble dwellings, no entire communities devoted to the creation of new luxuries, by which to provoke into activity the palled

* This article was written in 1832. A considerable change has come over the habits of the people since that period—a change, we are sorry to say, which, in due proportion as it apes the manners and habits of foreigners, has impaired what was proper in our own.

and palsied appetite; but, on the other hand, we see no shelterless misery, no squalid want and degradation, no riotous and reckless masses of starving fathers and mothers, and fatherless children, crying out for bread to their rulers, and, in the blindness and wantonness of their desperation, tearing away the pillars of peace, and order, and religion. Jonathan has his faults, it is true; and they are bad enough to need amendment. He chews his tobacco and drinks his whiskey, though not more liberally, we believe, than his British brother—still, however, in quantities far beyond the boundary of propriety and prudence. He thinks highly of his country—perhaps too highly. He is vain and boastful of the freedom he possesses; believes, or affects to believe, his sky as fine as the Italian; his mountains as high, his rivers as broad, long, and deep; his fields as fair and fertile, and his fruits and crops as abundant as any in the world; and in all this he is not unwilling to be put to the proof. In much of it he could maintain his ground as a challenger against all comers. He does sometimes strain his faith in his own possessions, but this is only when provoked by Mrs. Trollope and persons of her dimensions. Then it is that his halls of legislation are unrivalled for the excellence of the laws which they devise, and for the bursts of eloquence which they give out: then it is that he swaggers about the poets whom he never reads, and insists upon the fame of his writers, whom, speaking in domestic ears only, he is apt to decry with a spirit born entirely of his own individual jealousy and ambition: then it is that he lustily swears by the village artist, whose *chef-d'œuvre*, the tavern sign-board, he holds to be a sufficient promise that Italy and England shall yet be made to blush at their inferiority; and in all this he aims rather to display his patriotism than his judgment. But for the English temper which studiously tells him of his inferiority, he never would dream of asserting these wild pretensions. Certainly, John Bull has a most provoking habit, on his very entrance into another nation, of declaring his convictions aloud, of the wretched condition, in comparison with his own country, of everything which he beholds. He takes a malicious pleasure, if he finds the simple native satisfied with his condition, to make him ashamed of it. "You think yourself very happy here," he exclaims; "but that is all owing to your ignorance. Poor devil!

You should see England." This speech is written on his front, speaks in his eyes, and looks out in every movement of his frame, as he steps from the ship upon the threshold of the foreign country. Hence his *nom de guerre*. Bull, it is, wherever he goes, with a seeming anxiety, whenever he can, to thrust his horns into your bowels.

Nor is Jonathan so presumptuous as Mrs. Trollope and the rest of the Bulls would have him appear. He has some claims to be heard on the score of his possessions. He has some possessions of which he may be proud. The natural world in which he lives, and for which, perhaps, he takes quite as much credit to himself, as a respect for the great original will permit,—defies, and fully justifies any comparison with the features of the old world which it presumes to rival ;—and so long as Jonathan may refer to his patriots—his Washingtons (for the American Revolution brought forth others worthy of the name)—his warriors, (for have they not contended, and successfully, even with those of Great Britain ?)—his authors, as well on government as in ethics, as well in speculative and abstract philosophies, as in imaginative and occasional productions—(for has not Great Britain adopted and recorded them among her classics, and does she not honour them daily by reference, appropriation, and applause ?)—her painters, her Wests, her Alstons, her Leslies, her Newtons, (for are they not among the élite, and at the very head of British art ?) so long as this long and brilliant catalogue is spread before him, —may he not claim a portion of the honours—may he not reach his hand to the prize—may he not stand up in the great arena of competition and glory, among the patriots of Europe, and her heroes and statesmen, her authors and her artists, and, with conscious pride and honest enthusiasm, exclaim, " anch' Io son pittore ?" These are the triumphs of his people. There is something yet wanting, perhaps. For himself, he has not yet learned to enjoy a fine picture, or a delicious poem. The duty of going forth at sunrise, and labouring till sunset, day by day, for his bread, keeps him ignorant of those refinements which belong not to his situation. He has some idea that there are such refinements, and he may possibly crave them at times ; but the necessity of providing for his children and himself is before him ; he

seizes his axe, and, in the hollow echoes which it calls up in the woods, he finds company that makes him forget, or willingly forego, the thousand and one nameless enjoyments of ease and affluence. When Mrs. Trollope shall describe that working class in Great Britain with whom the arts, sciences, and literature—the muses and the graces—have taken up their abodes; refining vulgar asperities, rounding the rough features of the boor, and softening the savage manners of the hodman—it will be time enough then, to account for the deficiencies, and to seek an apology for the roughnesses of Jonathan. When it shall be shown to us, that, from one end of Great Britain to the other, there is a less ignorant, more honest, more enlightened body of artisans and labourers than in the territory of the United States, compassing our most remote extremes and dependencies, it will be quite time enough to enquire into the condition of our people, and to make a like provision for *their minds*, with that which the British government is now called upon to make for the *bodies* of its grieving and groaning population. We have not the slightest doubt, and certainly entertain no fear, that, in a comparison, man for man, and woman for woman, America, the child of a most unnatural and vindictive parent, will be found fully to acquit herself, with credit and éclat, of all the high, social, and political duties. To those which are insisted upon by fashion and mere convention, it is scarcely necessary that we should seek an answer. Not a few of Mrs. Trollope's leading and standing topics of complaint, in relation to the United States, are comprised in the following passage:

"The simple manner of living in western America, was more distasteful to me from its levelling effects on the manners of the people, than from the personal privations that it rendered necessary; and yet, till I was without them, I was in no degree aware of the many pleasurable sensations derived from the little elegancies and refinements enjoyed by the middle classes in Europe. There were many circumstances, too trifling even for my gossiping pages, which pressed themselves daily and hourly upon us, and which forced us to remember painfully that we were not at home. It requires an abler pen than mine to trace the connexion which I am persuaded exists between these deficiencies and the minds and manners of the people. All animal wants are supplied profusely at Cincinnati, and at a very easy rate; but alas! these go but a little way in the history of a day's enjoyment. The total and universal want of manners, both in males and females, is so remarkable, that I was constantly endeavouring to

account for it. It certainly does not proceed from want of intellect. I have listened to much dull and heavy conversation in America, but rarely to any that I could strictly call silly, (if I except the every where privileged class of very young ladies.) They appear to me to have clear heads and active intellects; *are more ignorant upon subjects that are only of conventional value*, than on such as are of intrinsic importance; but there is no charm, no grace in their conversation. I very seldom, during my whole stay in the country, heard a sentence elegantly turned, and correctly pronounced from the lips of an American. There is always something either in the expression or the accent that jars the feelings and shocks the taste."

This is sweeping enough, in all conscience; it requires but little effort, however, to understand it. Much of the complaint comes under the description contained in the querulous and familiar verse—

> "I do not like you Doctor Fell,
> The reason why, I cannot tell,
> But—I do not like you Doctor Fell;"

and, of course, requires no remark. Yet it is very proper that it should have one. Mrs. Trollope was the very woman to overawe the simple people of western America. She was, no doubt, a very talkative person, and could overwhelm them with European topics of which they had not the most distant idea. There are no people so distinguished by self-esteem as those who lead the secluded life of the forest. The Indian who is very chatty at home, and with his own people, only becomes exceedingly taciturn when in the presence of the whites. If very eloquent, very imaginative, very ingenious, when in his private circle or on great occasions,—he becomes rather dull out of it, and when there is no provocation to his utterance. The white man of the frontier partakes largely of this character and for the same reason. It is a distinguishing mark of the female. The effect upon such persons of the presence of a lady of Mrs. Trollope's dimensions, full of London and Paris, breathing her distaste and dislike of every thing she saw and heard, was calculated to render the women cautious and suspicious—to hush their merriment as she approached—to make them desist in her presence, and confine themselves, in all their intercourse with her, to what was simply necessary in suggestion and reply. Mrs. Trollope finds

them sensible, clear-headed, with active intellects, and chiefly ignorant upon subjects of mere conventional value. She does not seem to have suspected their reserve in her instance. She does not seem to conjecture that she was not the person to prompt them readily to unfold themselves at her approach ;—that her very knowledge on conventional subjects, so superior to theirs, was, of itself, sufficient to produce a reluctance to converse,—the natural fruit of an apprehension that their ignorance might be shown. There is a question always to be asked in such cases before we proceed to judgment. Are we the persons to bring out the secret nature of our companion ? One man shall be very silent in the presence of another, while a third shall find him fluent and even eloquent of discourse. It is not every person in whose hand the witchhazel will revolve, showing where the secret waters lie hidden out of sight.

Mrs. Trollope makes no reservations on these accounts;—and, while we are in for it, we may as well suggest a few other considerations which will yield a probable solution of her difficulties. She finds herself, not only among strangers, but in a new country, where all but herself are busied, not so much in making money as in making bread. It is with a view to putting her son in a like way that she took up her abode in Cincinnati—that place having been recommended to her, *especially as a new community*, where adventure and industry might do well. It is highly probable that she met with few or no persons, while there, who were natives of the place. All were strangers like herself—some probably from foreign countries, and all seeking the object which was the prime consideration with herself, in behalf of her progeny. Her obvious inference should have been, that there were few other than needy and busy people in the place—that these people had all along been a needy and a busy people. We do not look among such for the refinements of luxurious leisure. She was not in their category. What had been her rank in Europe—what her wealth, family and fortune—we know not ; but she had been in the enjoyment of leisure ; she had travelled ; she had possessed the advantages which spring naturally from a residence in the great city, and from frequent intercourse with books, pictures and society ; and, though coarse by nature, vul-

gar in her pretensions, and masculine in her tastes, she, at all events, was prepared to see and to feel the wants of a region, in which it was inevitable, from the nature of things, that there should be deficiencies. It was her misfortune to be found there,—to place herself in a world so utterly uncongenial, without taking with her into it a certain sufficiency of good sense, charity and indulgence, by which all other deficiencies would have been easily set at naught. But garrulous, restless, with but little to do, and amazingly assured of her own claims to be heard, she seems to have regarded the new settlement on the Ohio, as so much malleable material which she was to mould and form into consistency and shape after the fashion of her own fancies and desires. At all events, here was to be her field of exercise, in which all her talents were to be brought into full play, and where, at least, she was to find a wondering and submissive auditory. How many of Fanny Wright's notions she brought along with her, in the attainment of these objects, and in moving the antipathies of her neighbours, we are left to conjecture. On this head she is circumspectly silent. Among this busy and needy population, she was probably the only one having leisure to take into her hands the important business of giving to society its fine and shapely aspects. We may fancy her industry at this vocation. It will not be difficult to bring the restless, portly, talkative lady before the mind's eye,—in mixed London and Paris costume, issuing from the "Bazaar,"* looking rather *bizarre*, as you may suppose, sallying forth through the great avenues of lordly trees, —for Cincinnati was still measurably in the forest—to set the simplicity of her unsophisticated neighbours properly before their eyes. She is not choice at her game, and exacts her toll of attention from all sorts of wayfarers. Male and female equally contribute to her auditory, impatient enough of the twattle that keeps them from their thousand avocations. They pause at her beck, hear civilly what she has to say, and hurry off with thanksgivings that they have escaped so easily. They have no time for chat, and but little taste for such as she has to bestow. Even where

* Such was the name given to a large fashionable warehouse which this good lady built in Cincinnati, to her own ruin and the merriment of her neighbours, by whom she was looked upon as equally silly and conceited.

they might have betrayed the graces of speech, they do not care to respond to a person who is herself without any attractions. The greater number of them—speaking now for the men—were, perhaps the merest men of business, having no advantages whether of travel or education, as suspicious of the arrogant airs of the traveller, as were the females,—and able to contribute nothing but their experience and mother wit in the way of conversation. This, no doubt, when the hours of business are over, they are quite willing to do. But Mrs. Trollope is not the person to wait for hours. She asserts her consciousness of her own claims, by striving to subject all conditions to her will. She offends by what is arbitrary in her nature, in spite of what may even be attractive in her resources. But, really, to any body at all familiar with the country, knowing how it was settled, how newly, and by what classes of persons, generally,—what are its exigencies and what its poverty,—the reproach is simply absurd and laughable, when Mrs. Trollope tells us that she could not possibly meet with any idle, intelligent people. To look for a highly polished circle of society, in the enjoyments of ease and affluence, in the settlements along the Ohio, in 1827, might not be an absurdity nor an extravagance in the case of many travellers, but Mrs. Trollope was not certainly among the number.

We have alluded to what is so frequently charged upon the Americans, by foreigners, in regard to the extravagance of their supposed claims to position in comparison with other nations; how they assert claims which are preposterous, and triumphs which have no foundation in the truth. Mrs. Trollope has the happy knack of repeating everything which has ever been said to the prejudice and discredit of the country. She exclaims, with no little of a lofty complaisance which is peculiarly English—

"Jonathan must remember, that if he will challenge competition with the old world, the old world will now and then look out to see how he supports his pretensions."

Now, we take leave to say that Jonathan offers no such challenge; and, only suffer him to speak for himself, makes no pretensions for which he cannot give at least considerable show of reason. It is Mrs. Trollope, on the contrary, who seeks the poor fel-

low out in his hovel on the banks of the Ohio ; talks to him of the miserable servitude of his condition, compelled, as he is, to labour from dawn to dark for the vile grain and gruel of existence ; wonders at the content which he exhibits with such a fate ; endeavours to provoke his envy at the luxuries and the glory and honour he has lost in not being, or not having been born, an Englishman ; talks largely about the polish of court society, as if the mass of her people, any more than ours, see or know anything about it ; of the happy condition of those progenitors—their pride of place and numerous pleasures—from whom he has so lamentably degenerated ; assures him that his log house is not fit for the pigs ; that his wife talks in the most horrible and discordant *patois ;* and, if his daughters happen, most unluckily, at that moment to make their appearance, lectures them upon the hoidenish manners, the unpractised gait, the awkward and shocking simplicity and rude speech of themselves and countrywomen. And when Jonathan, in the bitterness of his heart, turns about and retorts with a comparative picture of the blessings of his own, and the miseries of the mother country—of the tyranny of its few, and the pauperism, the prostration and pollution of its many—why then, the wretch grows brutal, and ill-mannered, and cublike, and is said to have thrown down the gauntlet to that kind parent who has done so much for him—in driving him into a wilderness where he does so much for himself—in hunting him with arms and savages, and, failing, in this way, utterly to tear him from the strong root which he has taken—in denying him his honest trophies, and envying him the substance which his own vigorous manhood and independence have won from the wild and rugged nature on the waters of the Ohio, and in the bosom of Illinois. Well may Jonathan distrust—happy, indeed, if he come not in time to hate —this people, whom he vainly seeks, but without any reason or necessity, to soothe and conciliate. Long may he continue to regard the perils and privations of his own wilds and waters as a boon and blessing compared with the lock-and-collar refinements, the servitude, the strife and struggle for existence in the refreshing and polite circles of a British loom or colliery, an Irish bog, and a parish poorhouse, so necessary a concomitant of both.

We take from this volume another passage, which illustrates

Mrs. Trollope's strong disposition to quarrel with the rustics among whom she loiters, for the strangely perverse taste which enables them to be content with their institutions and mode of life. She regards it as perfectly horrible that a woodcutter of the Mississippi and a ditcher of the Ohio should feel none of the cravings of a London appetite.

"We visited one farm, which interested us particularly, from its wild and lonely situation, and from the entire dependence of the inhabitants upon their own resources. It was a partial clearing in the very heart of the forest. The house was built on the side of a hill, so steep that a high ladder was necessary to enter the front door, while the back one opened against the hill-side; at the foot of this sudden eminence ran a clear stream whose bed had been deepened into a little reservoir, just opposite the house. A noble field of Indian corn stretched away into the forest on one side, and a few half-cleared acres, with a shed or two upon them, occupied the other; giving accommodation to cows, horses, pigs, and chickens innumerable. Immediately before the house was a small potato garden, with a few peach and apple trees. The house was built of logs, and consisted of two rooms, besides a little *shanty* or *lean-to*, that was used as a kitchen. Both rooms were comfortably furnished with good beds, drawers, &c. The farmer's wife, and a young woman who looked like her sister, were spinning, and three little children were playing about. The woman told me that they spun and wove all the cotton and woollen garments of the family, and knit all the stockings; her husband, though not a shoemaker by trade, made all the shoes. She manufactured all the soap and candles they used, and prepared her sugar from the sugar trees on their farm. All she wanted with money, she said, was to buy coffee and tea and whiskey, and she could 'get enough any day by sending a batch of butter and chickens to market.' They used no wheat, nor sold any of their corn, which, though it appeared a very large quantity, was not more than they required to make their bread and cakes of various kinds, and to feed all their live stock during the winter."—pp. 58, 9.

One would say that this was a pretty fair specimen of plenty, ease, and the "all in all, content." But it would not be Mrs. Trollope unless there was some serpent in this elysium—some blight among the buds—some strange alloy, carrying with it a sober warning that "all is not gold that glistens." Hear what she says on this point:

"These people were indeed independent, Robinson Crusoe hardly more so—and they eat and drank abundantly; but yet it seemed to me that there was something awful and almost unnatural in their loneliness. No village bell ever summoned them to prayer, where they might meet the friendly greeting of their fellow men. When they die, no spot sacred by ancient reverence will receive

their bones. Religion will not breathe her sweet and solemn farewell upon the grave; the husband or the father will dig the pit that is to hold them, beneath the nearest tree; he will himself deposite them beneath it, and the wind that whispers through the boughs will be their only requiem. But, then, they pay neither tythes nor taxes, are never expected to pull off a hat or make a courtesy, and will live and die without hearing or uttering the dreadful words, 'God save the king.' "

We are not prepared to treat with less regard and affection than our traveller, the exquisite associations, so grateful to a people of long-established usages and society, with which the tastes are made to minister to the offices of religion. But Mrs. Trollope is no great deal of a philosopher, and certainly but little read in the progress of society, not to perceive that the exhibitions of taste, upon which she here insists, are about the very last to which a community ever attains, in its advances, from the satisfaction of its mere necessities to the enjoyment of objects of fancy of which it did not dream at first. Religion seems to be the first moral necessity of the human nature. The conviction of the necessity might be called an instinct, if revelation had not better prepared us to consider it an inspiration. In newly-established countries, as in old ones, where the inhabitants are poor, thinly settled, and simple, the dwellings assigned to the worship of God are rude and unsightly. The inartificial tastes of the people call for nothing better, and the deity endows no architect in advance of the exigency. Sometimes the hill-tops and the forests serve the purpose; sometimes the plains and valleys; the blue sky forming the glorious ceiling, and the great mountains or the huge, gigantic trees the props and pillars of the edifice. It does not appear that the tributes of praise and thanksgiving brought to these wild altar-places are a jot less pure and godworthy than those which ascend in incense from the majestic tabernacles of the European world. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that a service so entirely free from externals, so stripped of the pomp and ceremonials of worship, is apt to be the purest, as it is the simplest, testimony which the naked heart can offer to its Maker. The pride of display, the attractions of gorgeous instrumental music, the blinding glare with which wealth and refinement contrive to clothe all the objects of survey in the temples where they period-

ically assemble, are not here to offer inducements which religion itself fails to supply. The motives to attendance upon divine service in a forest country, such as our vast interior, are very few, apart from the simple desire for the worship itself; and the service and the scene, for the present at least, amply satisfy the demands as they meet the exigencies of the forest settler. It is his exigency that is consulted, not his tastes; and the substantive want which he feels being satisfied—his absolute necessity being answered—we must permit his tastes to make their progress, as slowly as they will, towards the decorations which, in older countries, sometimes obscure and conceal the substances around which they are accumulated. The tastes of men who gather the means of mere life in abundance, are never very long in making themselves felt. These tastes have a regular progress through relative degrees, all depending, from low to loftier, from high to highest, in the inevitable progress of the moral seasons. Gradually, with increasing means, a simple people come to feel increasing wants. Religion herself, the contemplative and devotional sensibilities, have a large influence in prompting the growth of the purer and more symmetrical tastes. The rude church, after a few years, gives place to something better: some village artist suggests the plan, and begins the work of improvement. The traveller comes and tells of what exists, in the shape of Grecian or Gothic temples, in other lands, and new and emulous improvements follow; and the affection which weeps over its young and kindred, is apt to linger in the quiet graveyard, and to plant some tribute and holy-shadowing tree within its sacred pale. This is a history. Could Mrs. Trollope revisit the scenes, ten years hence, which were so cheerless and wanting in her eye, she would then, in all probability, behold some ambitious approach to her lamented ideal. Time alone would be wanting to ivy and to moss the tower, to people the yard with tufted hillocks, and to make the young tree, planted above the child or parent, look like the gray and ghostly Druids that thus contribute to make holy the venerable parishes of old England. Her parochial graveyards have been thus crowned for centuries. At first they were rude like ours. Her people were similarly cold, rough, and ignorant of the gentler and soothing offices of taste, even as a minister of religion.

Time wrought its work with them, when the family became stationary, and could chronicle its past and living generations, on a Sabbath, in the one enclosure. The affections themselves are a work of time. The sensibilities spring up only in a race which has gone through long periods of probation. The first founders of a family are usually cold and stern, looking frowningly on the trivial, the merely sportive, the timid and the tender-hearted. Time works wonders on the spirit of such a race and subdues the blood, as it works through the bosoms of successive generations. Shall the forest fastnesses of infant America be allowed no time for a work which in Europe required ages? Why will not England send us some few thinkers among her travellers, instead of so many mere prattlers, giddy-pated old women, and pragmatical and consequential half-pay officers—persons who never begin to learn before they also begin to teach. The moral of American history and American society furnishes a study for the philosopher, in which the great history of civilization, its laws and progress, may be thoroughly canvassed and beheld almost from its first beginnings. In our forests, and remote from the Atlantic seaboard, it is sometimes the history of first human steps and necessities, almost totally separated from the influences of European history and civilization. Shall it be tried by such standards? Must not the traveller, on the contrary, become a devout student, on first principles, and on ground totally intrinsic and individual, before he can hope to discern with correctness, and see the quality in its proper aspect?

The objects for which Mrs. Trollope sighs are not available to her, in the very nature of things, in the world in which she looks to find them. They were not certainly at the period when she began the search. The case, we may assert with confidence, is somewhat altered now.* But the region even where she wrote was not so very cheerless, nor so wanting in its grateful though sad associations. If the husband or the father committed his loved one to the charge of earth beneath the forest tree, that tree was thenceforward sacred to his veneration. No axe defaced the mighty shaft that stood as a head stone over their remains. No stroke severed its protecting branches; and his footsteps lingered, morning and evening, as he drew near the si-

* Now,—in 1847.

lent place, and he was reminded of the treasure that made it to him as precious as any deposite that ever kept man's treasure. Why will not Mrs. Trollope make these reflections. Why not infer thus favourably of the human nature of the pioneer of the western wilderness. The suggestion would seem natural enough to one whose heart was not overflowing with a hostile bitterness, that found a 'marah' in all waters of America.

Let her be sure that the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman nature in our country—a nature stern at first,—fierce, rugged and impetuous—will work out its deliverance here, and assert its character, finally, as it did in Britain. In courage and enterprise, in skill and vigour, we have already shown our paternity—in good sense, too, that will not suffer imposition,—in strength that will not bear with overthrow,—we have written our English history on the world's annals. We shall, even in our wildest abodes, prove our possession of all those germs of character, now subdued and hidden it may be, which constitute the ample fund of English sensibilities. That our forest dwellers have not reared them set places and lovely temples, is because of their poverty and isolation. When it shall be the case with us that mountain, forest, and river shall maintain and send forth their thousands and tens of thousands to swarm and to people the vast space over which our sway is destined to extend, as in the glorious little garden island* from which they originally sprung—when our wilds, thick with human habitations, shall be made to teem and blossom with the fruits of human industry—when the axe of the pioneer shall cease to shake the woods, giving place to a less fatal music ;—and when the desolate and destitute pauper from a foreign empire, shall have grown prosperous with plenty, on the banks of the Wabash, the Arkansas, and the Mississippi,—then we doubt not that the village, will take place of the lonely cabin of the squatter,—that its white church-spire, peeping out of green thickets, will cheer the eye of the wanderer as he ascends the distant hill—that its sweet bell will call to Sabbath service, even

* We recal, as we write this phrase, the fragment of an *American* ballad (an old one too) to which we listened in our childhood :

"Oh! England is a lovely garden,
But many a bitter weed grows there."

as in 'merrie England,' (Is she merry now?)—and all the tastes, and all the materials of taste,—and all the luxuries, whether of the fashions, the fancies, or the heart, in the utmost width, and in the fullest sense of European perfection,—will be seen among us, preventing the censure, and possibly even provoking the applause of the future Mrs. Trollopes, however unwilling they may be to yield their stubborn English prejudices. Nor, we make bold to say, will our improvement be limited to these respects only. Some vital charities, we think, have already taken up their abodes, and planted their seeds, among a people, for whose ease, affluence and content, nature and an indulgent plan of government have done so much. Religion too, will assert her offices, and bring, to crown her homes and temples, the numberless and beautiful associations, that endear her to the tastes of the devotee, as she is precious to his hopes and sensibilities.

There is one sentence, one poor sarcasm, with which Mrs. Trollope concludes the paragraph already quoted. This sarcasm proves that neither her tastes nor her religion were rightly felt at the moment when she penned the remarks that relate to both. Why should not the American say, "God save the King!" God knows he needs a good deal of saving; and unless the interposition and the prayers of others avail for him, it is very doubtful if his own will have the desired effect. "God save your king!" say we—"such as he is!" But we propose not to write his history, or that of his predecessor. Our ink is scarcely dark enough for the task, and we should seek to borrow for this purpose that of the British journalist when he writes about America. We have little reason as a people to pray for King or Regent,* but our prayers are given to their need rather than their desert. We pray for them most heartily. We scarcely give ourselves much concern about either, but have not the slightest objection

* The Georges, Third and Fourth. The former, a vindictive enemy of America; the latter,—but why speak of him. For the present incumbent of the throne, Victoria!—God bless the girl!—we say this from the bottom of our hearts, and all America has said it from the moment that she received the crown. It is the error of British rule and British writers that they will not suffer England to be loved by America.

that the Deity would have them all in his special keeping. It is only in a political sense that we forbear this prayer. We regard the relations of the monarch and his subjects, as derogatory to the latter—(much less at the present day than when George IV. was king—thanks, may the Briton say, to the progress of opinion in America,) and calculated, through its caryatides of nobility and aristocracy, to create and to keep up a condition of things, hollow, corrupt, and artificial. We have no more hostility to his name or person, than we have fear or affection for his power.

One of the subjects in this volume, in which Mrs. Trollope is rather right than wrong, is that of "religious revivals." These proceedings afford her, unhappily, but too much just occasion for censure. Her description of their ill effects upon society, morals and manners, in certain portions of the country, is scarcely exaggerated. The extent to which this fanaticism has prevailed, and still measurably prevails, among the ignorant, the morose, the distempered of our population, is sometimes productive of the most humiliating exhibitions, such as she describes. The readiness with which the unconscious, the young and timid, fall victims to wild and exaggerated sentiments—startling delusions—gloomy and desolating terrors, and the chimeras of a deeply aroused imagination; and the great growth of fanaticism, which, in substituting cant and clamour and ostentatious prayer, for the quieter and more gentle rites and offices of a pure and proper religion, tend necessarily to overthrow the latter—are all too evidently before our eyes, not to awaken serious alarm among the intelligent and truly pious for the safety of that scheme of civil and religious tolerance, which has been thought, and with propriety, one of the most grateful features in our government and constitution. The only security, indeed, for our social and civil welfare—apart from the reliance to be placed upon the daily increasing intelligence of the people—is to be found in the great variety and number of religious sects which fill up our country; neutralizing, necessarily, the influences and efforts of one another, and preventing that degree and kind of concert and cooperation, necessary to the full success and predominance of either, should their tendency be to the acquisition of a political

ascendancy. But this very fact, to which we refer in some degree for our political security, is probably one of the causes that lead to the fanaticism complained of. These excitements frequently originate in the struggles of sects to outdo each other in their efforts at popular conversion. Is it said that one denomination has been particularly successful in bringing the sinner to his knee,—then the effort follows on the part of the rival sect, to achieve even superior successes after the same fashion. There is a rivalry in the churches as well as in other classes of the body social; and in the business of emulation, religion, which is the pretext, is mistaken, and even the common proprieties of life are set aside and forgotten. Something, too, may be ascribed to the irregular manner in which church service is vouchsafed to people living in remote districts—to the gloomy temper which flows from extreme loneliness where the temperament is morbid, and the humours are corrupt and fermenting—and something to the eager and mercurial temper of our people, who, with an imagination continually on the stretch, achieving, or impatient for achievement, carry with them into all their aims and performances a sanguine and fervent zeal, always ready to overboil and overflow, and continually turning, for new outlets, to novel occasions for excitement. Hence, the rage with which strange doctrines are seized upon and adopted,—the more extravagant, seemingly the more popular—hence Millerism, and Mormonism, and Wrightism,—month's phrenzies which serve the purposes of moral safety-valves, and carry off the overflow of blood and bile, at periods when, without such agents, they might endanger the wholesome condition, and even the safety of the commonwealth. The excesses of the regular sects in religion are of this complexion. They rarely last long, and are lessening yearly in the number and the excess of their exhibitions, in proportion to the spread of our population and of the popular intelligence.

Mrs. Trollope, with much truth and justice, attributes the undue and sometimes improper influence of the clergy over the American women to the attentions which they receive from this class. We have italicised a few of her opinions on this particular, in the selected passages, by which her meaning and ours may be the more easily understood. In speaking of the Cincinnati

theatre, she tells us that "ladies are seldom seen there;" and "by far the larger portion deem it an offence to religion to witness dramatic representations." "It is," says she, "*in the churches and chapels that the ladies are to be seen in full costume;* no evening in the week but brings throngs of the young and beautiful to the chapels and meeting-houses, *all dressed with care, and sometimes with great pretension: it is there that all display is made—all fashionable distinction sought.*" "The proportion of gentlemen," she proceeds, "attending these meetings is very small; but often, as might be expected, a sprinkling of smart young clerks makes the display intelligible and natural." Of the truth of this, and its application, with some qualifications, to almost every section of the Union, there is not the most distant question. Mrs. Trollope might have gone farther. She might have traced to the influence of sectarianism the absence of all popular amusements in America, those excepted which are brutal, and which we have borrowed from her own country, where a like influence, though perhaps to a more limited extent, has been productive of similar results. As she has properly remarked, the working-people must have some relaxation. They must have amusements of one kind or another; and, being denied those which are innocent, they necessarily seek those which are vicious and of easy attainment. The rigid exactions of the clergy, who set their faces studiously against everything which savours of pleasantry and play, have driven thousands from the enjoyment of less dangerous luxuries to the gambling table and the tavern; and until we shall provide for our youth of both sexes places of common resort, where innocent recreations, free from any grave and gloomy influences, shall satisfy the demand which nature herself appears to make for such indulgencies, we shall continue to see thousands of the one falling victims to the merest cant and the most drivelling fanaticism, and even a greater proportion of the other class prostrating the noblest faculties of mind and body alike to the excesses of the brothel and the bottle. Until we confine religion to its offices of unpretending charity, and quiet and persuasive tuition—until we restrain it in its more ostentatious and intolerant exhibitions, and, with a sense sufficiently enlightened, learn to hold in becoming scorn and contempt the vulgar and tyrannical superstition which makes all

amusement synonymous with crime—the evil will go on increasing, until all the choice and generous charities, all the pure offices of society, all its arts, all its polish and politeness, will be made to fraternize with those characteristics of a slavish zeal, which, in all times and nations, have made ultraism, in matters of religion, the most malignant and bitter despotism that ever afflicted or degraded man, and misrepresented and defamed his Creator.

The following brief reference to our literature will amuse many readers. There is some reason in the idea that the magazine character of our newspapers, and the very general diffusion through them of a false standard, as well in taste as in doctrine, has been the greatest enemy to its value and increase. It may be doubted, however, whether this evil be not, in great part, counterbalanced by the large circulation among the people, through the same media, of a general, though perhaps a superficial, knowledge of things. The anecdote touching the shoemaker poet is doubtless a caricature. The lady thought perhaps of Bloomfield.

"In truth there are many reasons which render a very general diffusion of literature impossible in America. I can scarcely class the universal reading of newspapers as an exception to this remark; if I could, my statement would be exactly the reverse, and I should say America beat the world in letters. The fact is, that throughout all ranks of society, from the successful merchant, which is the highest, to the domestic serving man, which is the lowest, they are all too actively employed to read, except at such broken moments as may suffice for a peep at a newspaper. It is for this reason, I presume, that every *American* newspaper is more or less a magazine, wherein the merchant may scan, while he holds out his hand for an invoice, 'Stanzas by Mrs. Hemans,' or a garbled extract from 'Moore's Life of Byron;' the lawyer may study his brief faithfully, and yet contrive to pick up the valuable dictum of some American critic, that 'Bulwer's novels are decidedly superior to Sir Walter Scott's;' nay, even the auctioneer may find time as he bustles to his tub or his tribune, to support his pretensions to polite learning, by glancing his quick eye over the columns, and reading that Miss Mitford's descriptions are indescribable.' If you buy a yard of riband, the shopkeeper lays down his newspaper, perhaps two or three, to measure it. I have seen a brewer's drayman perched on the shaft of his dray and reading one newspaper while another was tucked under his arm; and I once went into the cottage of a country shoemaker of the name of Harris, where I saw a newspaper half full of 'original' poetry directed to Madison F. Harris. To be sure of the fact, I asked the man if his name were Madison. 'Yes, madam, Madison Franklin Harris is my name.' The last and the lyre divided his time, I fear too equally, for he looked pale and poor."—pp. 88, 9.

All this is clearly satirical ; but an important fact escapes from beneath the chuckle of the traveller, and leads us to conjectures, and to a course of reasoning, which scarcely disturb her progress. If English literature be so accessible to our people, and if the appetite for reading be so universal that the riband merchant and the brewer's drayman couple their studies with their servile occupations, and, in their appetite for the former, scarcely afford themselves time for the latter, what must be the final effect upon the intelligence of the great body of the people ? If English literature can bestow wisdom, or good taste, or knowledge, or nice sensibilities, it is very sure that we are to have them ; and the general diffusion of literature, so far from being impossible in America, is, under these suggestions, the most probable thing in the world. Here, too, it would seem that our lady traveller somewhat conflicts with her own previous statements, that money-making, without regard to any other object, was the great pursuit in America. It does seem not only that this is not the case, but that the workingman is unwilling to lay down his newspaper in order to secure money. But nothing is more absurd than Mrs. Trollope's mode of reasoning for the whole from the few. This worthy lady, with an adroitness peculiarly her own, always contrives, when compelled to state something praiseworthy or good of the country or its institutions, to couple it with some alloy, by which the admission shall finally tell against us. Some of these instances are worthy of attention. We cannot say that she often suggests the false, but she too frequently suppresses the true ; and this our charity would not so much ascribe to the wish to misrepresent, as to an unqualified ignorance of the subject. Her deficiency seems to bring no misgivings to her mind ; indeed, the desperate desire to prate on all topics, so peculiar to her, has not suffered her to perceive or regard it, and will scarcely permit her American reader to set it down to the right score, or to justify her on any. The following passages should surely bring us large accessions of emigrants, since the evils of the country, as detailed in the text, are those, not of its resources or its institutions, but rather of the simple or stiff-necked people who cannot comprehend, and who do not know how to appreciate its advantages.

" Mechanics, if good workmen, are certain of employment, and good wages

rather higher than with us; the average wages of a labourer, throughout the Union, is ten dollars a month, with lodging, boarding, washing, and mending; if he lives at his own expense he has a dollar a day. It appears to me that the necessaries of life, that is to say, meat, bread, butter, tea, and coffee, (not to mention whiskey,) are within the reach of every sober, industrious, and healthy man who chooses to have them; *and yet I think that an English peasant, with the same qualifications, would, in coming to the United States, change for the worse.*"—pp. 104, 5.

And again:—the only mistake in this passage is that of the *general* for the *exception;* the assertion that the following is a singular and not the universal case—the *oasis* shining forth amid the sands and solitudes of barrenness and desolation:—

"There was one man whose progress in wealth I watched with much interest and pleasure. When I first became his neighbour, himself, his wife, and four children, were living in one room, with plenty of beefsteaks and onions for breakfast, dinner, and supper, but with very few other comforts. He was one of the finest men I ever saw; full of natural intelligence and activity of mind and body, but he could neither read nor write. He drank but little whiskey, and but rarely chewed tobacco, and was therefore more free from that plague-spot of spitting which rendered male colloquy so difficult to endure. He worked for us frequently, and often used to walk into the drawing room and seat himself on the sofa and tell me all his plans. He made an engagement with the proprietor of the wooded hill before mentioned, by which half the wood he could fell was to be his own. His unwearied industry made this a profitable bargain, and from the proceeds he purchased the materials for building a comfortable frame or wooden house; he did the work almost entirely himself. He then got a job for cutting rails, and as he could cut twice as many in a day as any other man in the neighbourhood, he made a good thing of it. He then let half of his pretty house, which was admirably constructed, with an ample portico that kept it always cool. His next step was contracting for the building of a wooden bridge, and when I left the Mohawk, he had fitted up his half of the building as an hotel and grocery store; and I have no doubt that every sun that sets sees him a richer man than when it rose. He hopes to make his son a lawyer, and I have little doubt that he will live to see him sit in congress; when his time arrives, the wood-cutter's son will rank with any other member of congress, not of courtesy, but of right, and the idea that his origin is a disadvantage will never occur to the imagination of the most exalted of his fellow citizens."—pp. 108, 9.

Of course, this condition of things, which is one, certainly, not only of unexampled prosperity, but within the reach and attainment of any and every person of worth and character, has its qualifications in the jaundiced vision of the London lady. The affluence brings with it vicious excesses; the equality,

coarse familiarity, etc. We forbear multiplying quotations of this description, numerous as they might be, exhibiting the great advantages held out to the industrious and honest, by the young and flourishing states, which seem to be censurable only because they are not old and in decay.

We shall merely advert to a long notice of the acted drama, and condition of theatricals at Cincinnati, the fine arts, and misnamed delicacy of demeanour and thought, which puts all good manners and modesty to the blush. The whole is a broad English caricature, grounded possibly in truth, but forfeiting, in the variety of its decorations, all distinctive claim to that character. The chapter is illustrated by a lithograph, exhibiting the interior of a box and part of the pit of the Cincinnati theatre. Five persons occupy the former—two of the gentler sex, and three—so called—gentlemen. The feet of one of the latter are protruded, parallel with his head, over and in front of the box. His person exhibits a crouching outline, not unlike that of a frog when about to make his leap. His two male companions occupy seats equally conspicuous with the feet of their comrade;—one of them with his jacket off and placed under him, his back to the *house* and his face to the ladies of his own box; the other holding an oblique position, which enables him to behold the performance and the fair at the same moment. It may not be out of place to add, that the artist has made the prominent—that is to say the unjacketted—gentleman, purely British in his frame of body—as unlike the American figure as it could possibly have been drawn. It would be quite amusing were it to appear, that, in this description of American manners, a regular representative of John Bull had sat for the picture. The whole affair, however, we take to be the broadest fun and fancy; though we are far from thinking it impossible to find a theatrical, or, indeed, any kind of exhibition, in either nation, into which some personages do not sometimes penetrate, neither prepared by fortune, birth, or education, to appreciate the performances or do credit to the company. If by this picture we are to understand that the family of Jonathan is one *sui generis*, and there is no member, indigent, vulgar, or brutal, in that of John Bull, why then, the humours of Mrs. Trollope are certainly legitimate; but if this

be not the case, if some Britons are now and then to be found, ill-graced, ill-dressed, ill-mannered, grog-drinking, and tobacco-chewing—John himself will be somewhat at a loss to comprehend the peculiar point and application in this description.

The fact is—and hence the difference wherever it exists—the poor man in America is prosperous enough, occasionally, to indulge in some things rather beyond the common necessaries of life; while the English labourer, in the land which he so much loves, has but little from his daily toil beyond his daily bread. Jonathan can occasionally take his wife and sons and daughters to the play-house, while John Bull, unless he break in upon his main comforts, or deny himself some of his usual cravings, must be content to leave all such spectacles to the elder brothers of his feudal family. The false delicacy among our females, of which Mrs. Trollope speaks in the same passage, is properly a subject of reprehension and rebuke. A few years of increased prosperity and increasing population, will, however, have remedied in great part the evil. The reason of it may readily be found in the seclusion and solitude which distinguish, and must for a long time distinguish, the greater portion of western America—where the lack of society—its mutual attritions which provoke improvement, and the absence of that social scrutiny, which leaves nothing amiss without its becoming censure—has necessarily left certain features of primitive life, upon which the future satirist may declaim at leisure.

We had marked for selection a chapter on the subject of a methodist camp meeting, written with some felicity, and, we fear, too much truth. Our limits warn us, however, of the propriety of its suppression. The reader of Mrs. Trollope will do well to linger upon this chapter, and inquire in how much the national manners—not to speak of national morals—are liable to perversion and prostration by such practices in general. We have already remarked upon the absence of popular amusements in our country, and the unhappy, and we may add, the unavoidable consequences to public virtue and the nation at large, of their exclusion. On this head, in the course of a chapter devoted to a notice of the city of Baltimore, we find the following passage.

"The theatre was closed when we were in Baltimore, but we were told that it was very far from being a popular or fashionable amusement. We were, indeed, told this every where throughout the country, and the information was generally accompanied with the observation, that the opposition of the clergy was the cause of it. But I suspect that this is not the principal cause, especially among the men, who, if they were so implicit in their obedience to the clergy, would certainly be more constant in their attendance at the churches; nor would they, moreover, deem the theatre more righteous because an English actor or a French dancer performed there; yet on such occasions the theatres overflow. The cause, I think, is in the character of the people. *I never saw a people so totally divested of gaiety;* there is no trace of this feeling *from one end of the Union to the other*, (rather sweeping, we should say, though nearly correct for one who has been only at one end of it.) *They have no fêtes, no fairs, no merry makings, no music in the streets, no punch, no puppet shows.* If they see a comedy or a farce, they may laugh at it, but they can do very well without it, &c., &c. A distinguished publisher at Philadelphia told me that no comic publication had ever yet been found to answer in America."—pp. 170-1.

A due regard to the establishment of a regular system of popular sports, would drive intemperance out of the land, and render perfectly unnecessary those badges (however valuable and necessary now) of national shame and dishonour, the temperance societies.

Washington pleased our traveller. Upon that part of our constitution, which will not permit our government agents abroad, to receive, or rather to retain, presents, of whatever value, from any foreign potentate, Mrs. Trollope remarks that "it would be a better way to select for office such men as could not be seduced by a sword or snuff box." Perhaps so—but it may be that the American congress looked deeper than the dread of corruption in the adoption of this law; and yet, recognising this as their sole reason, Sir Robert Walpole should be authority for its propriety—in the estimation of an English lady, at least.

Mrs. Trollope has spoken some truth at the end of the following passage:—

"I can by no means attempt to describe all the apartments of this magnificent building, (the Capitol,) but the magnificent rotunda in the centre must not be left unnoticed. It is indeed a noble hall, a hundred feet in diameter, and of an imposing loftiness, lighted by an ample dome. Almost any picture (excepting the Centaurs) would look paltry in this room, from the immense height of the walls; but the subjects of the four pictures which are placed there, are of

such high historic interest, that they should certainly have a place somewhere as national records. One represents the signing of the Declaration of Independence; another, the resignation of the presidency by the great Washington; another, the celebrated victory of General Gates at Saratoga; and the fourth—I do not well remember, but I think it was some other martial scene commemorating a victory; I rather think that of Yorktown.

"One other subject in the Capitol must be mentioned, though it occurs in so obscure a part of the building that one or two members to whom I mentioned it, were not aware of its existence. The lower part of the edifice, a story below the rotunda, &c., has a variety of committee rooms, courts, and other places of business. In a hall leading to some of these rooms, the ceiling is supported by pillars, the capitals of which struck me as peculiarly beautiful. They are composed of the ears and the leaves of the Indian corn, beautifully arranged, and forming as graceful an outline as the acanthus itself. *This was the only instance I saw in which America has ventured to attempt a national originality; the success is perfect.* A sense of fitness always enhances the effect of beauty. I will not attempt a long essay on the subject; but, *if America, in her vastness, her immense natural resources, and her remote grandeur, would be less imitative, she would be infinitely more picturesque and interesting.*"—pp. 185, 6.

We might dilate on this lesson, but it is one which our people have already begun to con for themselves. With them the beginning is all. They will scarcely need a second suggestion.

The notes on slavery are full of errors, and scarcely deserve a mention. The details are many of them false—the lady knows nothing of the subject, as it obtains, and is regulated in the United States; and her speculations upon it are only the commonplaces of the philanthropists, such as we have been accustomed to hear in all ages. But that the topic is an irksome and ungracious one, in many sections of our country, we should be pleased to give it a place, were it only to afford our readers a fair specimen of the numerous and gross absurdities into which a superficial and flippant writer is so likely to fall, in the discussion of institutions which lie so far below the surface as ours—which may not be *seen*, and can only be judged of and known by those who *feel* them.

The facility is truly ludicrous, with which Mrs. Trollope, when pleased with an unknown object, discovers it to be any thing but American. She appears to have been fortunate in her visits to Washington Square, Philadelphia, in finding unoccupied benches. The general complaint is, at this period, that they

are not provided in sufficient numbers to meet the demand for them. At the Chesnut street theatre, she saw one man "deliberately take off his coat that he might enjoy the refreshing coolness of shirt sleeves." Here too, as in all other places, the men wore their hats and spat incessantly.

A great deal in relation to Philadelphia, its manners, customs, refinement, and pretension, is said by the writer; but as the larger portion of this has found its way into the journals of the country, and contains, amidst some truth and point, much that is false and foolish, we forbear to notice it. For the rest, we have no apprehensions that it will either mislead or materially provoke. She compliments the manners of the Philadelphians—their freedom from affectation, their simplicity of dress, but inveighs against the coldness and dryness of the gentlemen—the absence of warmth, heart, and enthusiasm on all points, national independence and emancipation excepted.

We will not be thought to speak slightingly of our women when we confess ourselves to have been struck, in many parts of this volume, with those frequent references which the writer has made, and often so correctly, to their condition in the United States. Much of this stuff is undoubtedly without foundation as it relates to the habits among the better classes of our country; and many of the particulars dwelt upon by Mrs. Trollope only prove the very equivocal character of that society into which she seems most generally to have fallen. Much, however, is stubbornly true, and might, and should, with all due alertness, be remedied and amended by those whom it most immediately concerns.

The great difficulty in the way of the sex in the United States, is a result of its present physical prosperity. It is because of the small amount of responsibility which is thrown upon them. They do not take their appropriate place in society, as their social tasks, ordinarily, are so very small. They are the ornaments rather than the agents of society—the decorations rather than the vital instruments for the maintenance and the improvement of the social moral. Their influence, acknowledged while they are girls, is apt to be wholly lost when it is most important—when they become wives and mothers. The importance of an individual among us is in just proportion to his usefulness. But woman forms an ex-

ception to this law, and we demand that she shall not be useful. For this there is a present reason. So readily are the necessaries of life provided in our country, by its energetic industry, by its fruitful soil, by its benignant climate, that the particular duty of providing them, which involves so many other duties, is rarely suffered to devolve upon her. She is too much kept apart from those trials and toils with which the man has to contend. She shares too little in his out-door interest—too little of his cares, and, consequently, too little of his real affections. Kept carefully from that active training which schools him from his birth, her mind has no corresponding development with his, by which, matching his fairly in the knowledge and appreciation of his interests, she can become an help-meet unto him—without becoming which, she cannot arrive at her legitimate sphere, or take that fast hold upon his respect without which there is no security in the affections. She is his pet, his plaything, rather than his companion. She brings him music rather than succour and counsel ; and it is only while she is beautiful and young, and gentle and winning, that she secures that homage which involves an extreme deference to her while a girl, for which she pays terribly when she becomes a mother. She is then banished to the nursery, which would perhaps be no improper place in which to find her, had it been that her own training had properly prepared her for that of her children. By removing her from the ordinary duties of society, while she is young, her intellectual and her moral strength is enfeebled and impaired ; and this deficiency is fatal to her just ascendancy with the man the moment that the rose of girlhood has faded from her cheeks. This is one of the causes which leave so many American firesides cheerless—which yield to the clergy such large and despotic influence over the sex—which lessen the deference of the young to parental authority ; all of which evils, and many others, though not to the extent complained of in the book of Mrs. Trollope, are evils that we must deplore, and cannot too hurriedly set ourselves to amend and remedy.

We must now finish with the work of our fair enemy. It is a book with many faults, many follies, much truth, and certain merits,—a lively tone, a satirical humour,—some picturesqueness, and a style which is suited to the masculine and rather coarse

character of her tastes and intellect. Our object has been rather to let our own people see a little of what is said about them abroad —whether just or unjust, well or ill-founded,—without troubling ourselves to offer any vain qualifications of the one, or equally vain defences or denials of the other. We had our purpose also in availing ourselves of the occasion to dwell upon certain of our unquestionable defects and faults, glad of any foreign ally by whose agency the more earnestly to impress them upon the attention of our people. In the performance of this duty, we have freely spoken of our censurable peculiarities; not, as we have already stated, with any desire to set Mrs. Trollope right, or to console our people for the slight consideration which she yields their claims and merits. The national improvement has been our better object; and for this object we can forgive many worse offences against our *amour propre*, than has been committed by this venerable lady. Her revenges for numerous disappointments may be of service to us in the end. Some of her suggestions are worthy our heed, and would have been far more valuable and useful had they been dictated by a less spiteful and malicious temper. She has looked on all things in an unquiet and vexing spirit, and with a jaundiced and ungracious eye. Her chief subjects of complaint, in the review of the Americans and their customs, other than those to which we have especially directed our attention—and the truth of which, in a spirit of equity rather than of law (for it would be difficult, under the general issue, for the lady to prove much of her assertions) we have freely admitted,—are apt among all reasonable and not ill-tempered people to provoke a smile. They are evils mostly of the toilet and tea-table, —subjects of infinite importance, we grant,—but important, we should suppose, rather to the young and budding of her sex, than to an ancient and wise woman of Mrs. Trollope's make and dimensions. Few of our national defects, as urged by this lady, seem material ones,—none are vital,—none, according to her own admissions, are irremediable; and yet, when you look at her summary of our offences, you find them sufficient in her regard to subject us to the seven-fold curse,—the doom of sores, *a capite ad calcem*, such as John Bull loves to visit upon the nations against whom he makes war. She admits the country to be "fair to the

eye, and most richly teeming with the gifts of plenty." She "has never seen a beggar within its limits." We have been less fortunate,—having seen many,—but they chiefly came from that fast-anchored isle which is so blessed bright to her imagination; she beholds all prospering who desire and deserve to be so—many wise, intelligent and agreeable; most virtuous; all solicitous to please; and yet, what with the lack of the arts and sciences, which she notes in the western mud hovel,—the absence in the same regions of that fashionable training which in London and Paris denote a conventional arrangement which has been maturing a thousand years—the dearth of "snug, coterie and literary lady," in all the strange places into which she has thought it fitting to lift her forehead—"she has seen nothing to soften the distaste which the aggregate of her recollections has left upon her mind." But some of her recollections which cause this distaste have not been recorded in this volume. We might supply them at large, were we to adopt the frequent *on dit* of the region where she hung out the banner of the "Bazaar," but we prefer simply to glimpse at the circumstances to which the "aggregate" of her distastes was due.

It is impossible for us to say what were the wild anticipations of Mrs. Trollope on coming to this country: we can gather some of her objects. We are not accountable for her disappointments. What did she expect to see or find? What were her ideas of a youthful people, whose history is peculiar in only one respect, that of the extreme severity and hardship of their early fortunes? Knowing little or nothing of this history, she looked for everything —not merely the things to which in her own land she had been familiar, but those after which her fancy sighed; and, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, she calculated upon an equal grasp of the two worlds, so hostile elsewhere, of reality and romance—the latter for her own enjoyment, the former, in the trading world of Cincinnati, for her son. From her own and other accounts, she found neither, besides, as she grumblingly admits, "spending a great deal of money."

Here, no doubt, was the mischief. That spending a great deal of money, where one sets out with the pleasant expectation of making it only, is monstrous—well calculated to impair one's tem-

per, to defeat the judgment, and give to all objects of sight the aspect of things "seen through a glass darkly." In consideration of her pecuniary losses in America, Mrs. Trollope has a customary privilege of grumbling. We can read the philosophy of all her humours in the elongation of her purse as well as her countenance. She hath had losses, and she hath the right of the loser to complain; and she does this with a cordial courage that is absolutely refreshing. It is quite as surprising as amusing to what an extent of absurdity—having at any time recognized her as a rational woman—this sort of courage carries her. How wilful blind it makes her, as well as wilful wrong! It was one blunder, writing such a book, to let us know how long and in what parts of the United States she sojourned; it was another to afford us such frequent glimpses, as she does, of what her own training for society and education had been; but to show by what standards she gauges the American objects of her survey, was, blunder upon blunder, the very worst of all. What would be, in the eyes of other justly-minded persons, standards of simple contrast, she adopts as standards of comparison. She plants, side by side, the miserable township on the Ohio and the Mississippi—its streets scarcely hewn out from the forests, and great cumbrous trunks still rising dark and unsightly in their midst—and the stately avenues of the British and the French metropolis. She puts in opposition the manners and habits of a poor and scattered peasantry along our frontiers, not to those of the working-classes, the peasantry and small farmers at large in Great Britain and upon the Continent, but with the wealthy and well-educated classes of these countries—those who, if not wholly above the necessity of daily toil for daily bread, have at least a thousand advantages of capital, study, society, of which the simple people of our new States have never had the slightest glimpes. If, in her seclusion at Cincinnati, a small country town of 30,000 inhabitants, she suffers a tedious evening, she exclaims, particularly if any of the luckless natives shall happen to be present, "Ah! how different in London! There," &c.; and this sort of reminiscence continually stares us in the face in her volume, as no doubt it was made to stare a hundred times a day into the faces of the Cincinnati. Cincinnati has no Tower and no Lions; no Westminster Abbey; no

glorious parks and public squares ; no carefully trimmed and garnished walks ; no singular and fascinating luxuries, such as console fashion and frivolity amidst the numerous pangs of idleness and deficient motive ; no lofty palaces and abodes, such as make Cockaigne an eternal boast among the sons thereof, and a by-word with many others : no towers ; no pillar like that which mounts aloft, "like a tall bully," in violation of one of the commandments ; no places of refuge for the *ennuyée*—of provocation for the *blasé*—of easy lounge, like Almack's, where nobility, and beauty, and grace, by the despotic magic of wealth, may realize, in dreamy hours of the midnight, the fairy-like delights of oriental magnificence ; nothing, in short, of that happy social experience which suffers no secrets and no scenes, and is seldom outraged by such exhibitions of *mauvaise honte* as, in the United States, continually come to disturb our lady traveller with doubts or memories of a past when fig-leaves were not at all essential to her own toilet—which is never shocked by petticoat, however short, nor beguiling bust, however boldly and openly displayed—and which yields itself, happy as languid sensibilities will allow, to the insidious waltz, in contact with the avowed and advertised *roué*. Such, we are prepared to admit, were the fashionable deficiencies of Cincinnati ; and there were others also, the existence of which it is less pleasant to allow. Doubtless there were deficiencies of society—society in its proper acceptation—a life of genial neighbours, drawn together by pleasant sympathies, of gentle and affectionate nature, soothed by mutual and superior tastes, and elevated by the influences of art and letters. The country was too new for this, at that period, or to any considerable extent ; and such a circle, wherever found in such a region, is always apt to be jealous of the intrusion of rude and incongenial elements. The stranger does not easily find access to its sanctuaries ; and the peculiar characteristics of Mrs. Trollope, seen at a blush, were not such as to entitle her to the *entrée* in these circles ; and there are many to be found in the very regions which our lady traveller, moving as one from Dan to Beersheba, pronounced wholly barren, which would do honour to the nicest tastes and acquirements of civilization in any country. Here she might have found hospitality mingled with grace, society without restraint, virtue that scruples not

at the innocent freedom of social intercourse, and the charm of a conversation which none but the rudely passionate would ever regard as lacking in geniality and warmth. But, as we have said before, it is not every hand in which the witch-hazel will exhibit its properties of magic. The treasure is for him who can find, not him who vainly summons it from the keeping of the master-spell.

Ordinarily, we are quite willing to believe, and scarcely hesitate to admit, that there is quite too much of the stiff and the starched (which is sometimes confounded with the stately) among the American women, particularly in the agricultural regions. In the commercial and the manufacturing our complaint would be the other way. The worst consequence of this frigid and frozen demeanour, apart from what it subtracts from the sweeter graces of society, is that of prompting the other sex to seek elsewhere, and in places of less questionable propriety, for that ease and gentleness of speech and habit, which constitutes so much of the nameless charm in woman. We are also persuaded, as our author particularly asserts, that our men suffer from like deficiencies of manner, by which society puts on an aspect of sterility, looks unproductive, is fettered when it should be flexible, and gives a wintry aspect to a sky which might easily be rendered as sweet and serene as summer. But this subject of society is one of many difficulties, and if we look heedfully at the condition of morals in those parts of the world where civilization claims to have achieved its last best triumphs of society, we shall be apt to hesitate in the desire for a change in that condition of things, which, while confessedly a great improvement in some respects, involves the loss or insecurity of treasures, in virtue and domestic happiness, infinitely more precious and desirable.

Seeing these histories elsewhere, (though admitting what we sometimes—nay frequently—lack ourselves,) we are slow to admit that, in the main, we are not—perhaps by reason of this very lack—greatly the gainers in a true and genial morality, and in a solid and manly firmness and resolve of character, which, if sometimes rugged and ungenial in its aspect, is nevertheless far more likely to be virtuous and patriotic. Our women may lack the voluptuous grace, but they are also free from the shameless practice

of the courtesan. Our men may indulge in the use of a loathsome and unnecessary weed,—but they are nevertheless men,—shrinking from no toil, asserting their manhood with courage,—patient under trial, steadfast in struggle,—cool, clear-headed,—doing always, and always indomitable. It is a curious fact that you seldom see a native American beggar, and never hear of a native highwayman. It is surely unnecessary, until we know what in reason may be required of us as a nation, to undertake either to account for or to excuse our deficiencies. What, let us ask, should be required at our hands? What should the Englishman require—he who, at no very remote period, emerged from barbarism himself—if indeed he has yet done so, with his prize fighting, his most famous pastime, and the brutal clamour of the "ring," forming a music so precious in his ears. The badges of his savage state are not yet entirely stricken from his limbs. He still wears the chains and collar of destitution and ignorance. He is still "Gurth, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon," groaning under a despotism which he has not yet discovered to be illegitimate, or which, having made the discovery and having the power, he lacks the necessary courage to remove—clinging still to his hereditary fictions, his feudal bonds, as tenaciously as if he loved them, and as their cruel consequences are destined, while he remains thus impotent, to cling to his progeny, even to the third and fourth generation. It is, indeed, marvellous to behold, how, with a momently increasing conviction of their equal weight and weakness, he sustains the laws and statutes which had their unnatural birth in a period of barbarian lawlessness and insecurity; and prefers them, with all their antediluvian inaptitude to his present wants and condition, simply because he dare not venture upon the deep and stormy waters—though with the successful example of the American pilgrims before his eyes,—of a toilsome but glorious experiment. What should such as he demand or expect from the hand of America? He, who, still lingering in mournful apathy, is unwilling to go back to what he was, unable to remain where is, and yet trembles to go forward! It is of him that we should ask, What are the expectations which he entertains of what is to be done by infant America before she can possibly commend herself to his gracious judgment? What

should be her progress, what her triumphs over, and what her relation to, the countries around her, and the nations from which she sprung? We are not ashamed, and certainly not unwilling, to answer, to *him*, the inquiry into what we have done and what we have become. The book of Mrs. Trollope, full as it is of malignant exaggeration, adroit sarcasm, and paltry inuendo, will, of itself, triumphantly for America, reply to the question if put by *him*. It is only necessary to say what *he* is and to indicate what *we* are. It is enough to describe him struggling without avail for those privileges of life and freedom, given him at his birth, but wrested from his possession and enjoyment by the very nation to which he gives up his energies, and for which he has spilt, and continues to spill, his blood like water, on the deeps and on the deserts, many a league from the narrow boundary which takes his labour without gratitude, and appropriates his spoil and his glory without honour or reward. He cries out for his birthright, and cunning, and custom, and an artificial inequality of condition, deny him his prayer; and we see him raving with desperate hopelessness, like a famished lion in his native forest, from which the more adroit hunter has carried off all the prey. Let Mrs. Trollope draw for *him* the picture, and present to his eyes the comparison between the Briton and the American. She will describe—she does describe for the latter—a numerous and a contented people, increasing in power, in population, and prosperity—happy in the institutions, which, if they show no pampered and isolated classes, afford equal protection to the liberties of all, and strangle not their industry, and obstruct not their enterprise. She depicts them resolute in overcoming obstacles, energetic and fearless in the pursuit of their own happiness amidst dangers and difficulties, ambitious of glory and applause, emulous of other nations, and, though they may have but just begun the march, advancing on their way with a keen diligence which promises neither to fail nor falter until they shall have attained the high eminence of a perfect equality with the very best and bravest among them.

ARTICLE II.

THE AMERICAN SAGAS OF THE NORTHMEN.*

I.

THE DISCOVERY OF NEW ENGLAND.

It is something, surely, to be able to boast that we have an American antiquity,—even though it be of a sort which cannot materially assist our claims to social rank in the great family of nations. The fact is important to our literature. It is so much raw material to our artists in fiction—a quarry to which the poet and novelist may repair with confidence, without much fear of exhausting their resources. The more rude the annals, the more susceptible of an original polish;—the more imperfect the history, the more encouraging to the genius which adventures boldly. The mounds and fortifications of North, and the ruined cities of Central America, silent to the historian, have a voice for the artist which he will surely hear. There will be a life one day put into these old idols and images of Palenque, which will resuscitate the wondrous past, which is now buried in their strange decay.

It is in this point of view that we are interested in the antiquities of America. It is not because we would learn their history, though, to the curious, this is desirable also. It is because we shall, from these shapeless masses, erect new fabrics, as from the ruins of ancient Rome, a new and scarcely less magnificent Rome is made to rise. Doubtless, there shall be incongruities in our structures. We shall see strange and solemn sculptures, looking, out of place, from walls which they do not beautify. But the new

* The Discovery of America, by the Northmen, in the Tenth century; with notices of the early settlements of the Irish in the western hemisphere. By North Ludlow Beamish, Fellow of the Royal Society, and member of the Royal Danish Society of Northern Antiquaries, &c. London: T. & W. Boone. 1841.

fabrics will still tell us something of the old, and provoke that spirit of contemplative inquiry which peoples the past for itself, and restores all its histories—histories not the less acceptable to our thoughts, because of the sweet, wild atmosphere of poetry which encircles them with its own peculiar halo.

That we have an American antiquity is now beyond all question. It will not lessen its value to us, that it belongs to our country rather than to our race. But, of this doubt, even, we are not certain. We are not sure to what people this history belongs. That there is a history, yet to be put on record—a history of great events, and of a very remarkable people, of whom the only remains are ruins—is a fact which taxes no credulity. These ruins are trophies which declare for a large progress in arts and arms. They speak for deeds, of which they are no longer the memorials. They assert an existence, for which they provide no name. The history may be quite as much our own as the ruins. It may be that these are monuments of our own ancestors. Here our own kindred may have set down their footsteps, and offshoots from our own parent stocks may have wielded the chisel that carved into an uncouth aspect of humanity this sad-looking and stone-eyed representative, which gazes upward upon us from the embracing earth. There is no evidence against this assumption. There are some proofs which speak in its behalf. But nothing so certainly as to deprive conjecture of any of her privileges.

Shall it be ours to find the key to this history, or shall the secret be read by our poets only? That these in time will reveal its substantial merits, we have no question; but shall their labours be anticipated by the more sedate and deliberate studies of the antiquarian? Shall we have the history before the poem? It may be so. There is that in the progress of art and science in the present day which offers large encouragement to curiosity and hope. We are on the eve, in all probability, of great discoveries, and need, possibly, nothing more than the smile of a happy inspiration to find the key to treasures of history equally grateful to the romancer and the sage. Shall we, through this medium, trace the progress of the lost tribes of Israel, from the east to the west, across the ocean straits which separate the continents? Shall we find the sources of American antiquity in the genius of the wan-

dering Phœnician, or in the bold adventures of the northern Vikingr? There is no good reason why all these races should not have found their way, under different circumstances of fortune, to the western hemisphere. There are good reasons for the faith that some of them have surely done so. The argument is strong in favour of the Northmen. Their sages assert a claim to have discovered North America six hundred years before the coming of Columbus, and to have found it, even then, in some degree, settled by the genius of civilization.

Receiving on trust some very plausible conjectures, the claim seems to be placed on good foundation. It is embodied fairly in the able and elaborate work of Professor Rafn, of the Royal Danish Society of Northern Antiquaries, of which an analysis and abridgment is now before us.* His facts and assumptions rest chiefly on the authority of certain ancient Icelandic manuscripts. These are undoubtedly authentic. It is only within a very few years that they have been made public and have undergone translation. Of this work there have been made two abridgments, one of which is American and one English. These are both respectable, and sufficiently satisfactory for popular use. The cost of a reprint and translation of the original work would probably be too expensive for either country. In the original, fac-similes are given of the principal manuscripts, and maps are furnished, which enable us to identify the places discovered by the Northmen with the same regions as they are known to us in modern times. These detailed statements are, of course, conjectural, and are to be received with caution. But the documents upon which the maps are founded have more certain claims upon our respect and attention. In brief, the greater number of savans, as well in Europe as America, consider it a point which scarcely admits of question, that the continent of North America was found and partially occupied by the Northmen fully five hundred years before the birth of Columbus. So far as we can perceive, the fact is nearly if not quite made out by the work of Professor Rafn. This work consists of the Sagas or narratives of certain famous northern voyagers. A Danish and Latin translation follows the Icelandic text,

* Antiquitates Americanæ, *sive Scriptores Septentrionales rerum ante-Columbianarum in America.* Copenhagen, 1837.

and the whole is accompanied by the illustrations and commentaries of the editor, by discussions historical and philological, and by geographical and archæological disquisitions of equal interest and value. It is something in favour of these sagas, that they do not seem to have been written to assert a claim of discovery. The attempts to colonize were few and feebly urged; and the descriptions given of the new countries are generally slight, and are only employed as tributary to the narrative of the achievements of some favourite hero. The chronicles are, in fact, so many histories of personal adventure. It is the deeds of the Viking, in a strange land, that are recorded; and what is said of the region where they occur, is simply as a background for the picture. The details are too artlessly stated, and the geographical features too carelessly sketched, to make these portions of the narrative obnoxious to suspicion.

The first of these Sagas to which we will ask the reader's attention, is that of Bjarni Herjulfson. This bold navigator was preceded by Erik the Red, by whom Greenland was discovered and colonized. His father had sailed with Erik, and the son set forth on a voyage in search of him. He discovered, according to our Professor, the region which is now occupied by Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the States of New England. This was A. D. 986. In 994, the track of discovery is taken up by Leif Erikson, the son of Erik the Red. Old Erik himself was about to depart on the same voyage, but was discouraged by an omen. Happening to tumble from his horse while on his way to the ship, he concludes it better to remain at home. His son, however, is not discouraged. With thirty-five men he sets sail, and makes his way to Newfoundland. Upon this he confers the name of Helluland, from Hella, a flat stone. His next discovery is that of a country, "flat and covered with wood, and white sands were far around where they went, and the shore was low." "Then," said Leif, "this land shall be named after its qualities, and called Markland," that is, "Woodland." Halifax is supposed to be the region thus described. From hence, Leif sails into the open sea with a north-east wind, and after being two days out sees an island, lying east of the land, which is assumed to be Nantucket. From the farther details, it appears that he "shaped his course through

Nantucket Bay, beyond the south-west extremity of the peninsula of Cape Cod; thence across the mouth of Buzzard's Bay to Scaconnet Passage, up the Pocasset River to the Bay of Mount Hope." Here he remained all winter, built houses, caught salmon, and got up with the sun at half past seven in the morning. He made some petty excursions into the country, gathered the grapes, and growing merry upon the juice, called the country Vinland, in regard to this grateful product. He departed in the spring for his own country, where the intelligence of his discovery produced a sensation.

Thorwald Erikson, his brother, pursues the adventure in 1002. Taking charge of the ship of Leif, he finds the territory upon which the latter had squatted, spends a winter in catching salmon and enjoying the grape after the manner of his brother, but is less fortunate in the issue of the expedition. In an encounter with the savages, whom he defeats with great slaughter, he is mortally wounded by an arrow. "I have gotten a wound under the arm," says the brave fellow to his comrades, "and it will prove a mortal wound to me. Now get ye ready to depart instantly, and bear me to that cape where I thought it pleasant to dwell. A true word fell from my mouth that I should dwell there for a time,—for there shall ye bury me, and ye shall set up crosses at my head and feet, and call the place Krossaness in all time to come." The cape where he was buried is supposed to be Cape or Point Alderton.

But Thorstein Erikson, his brother, is not willing that the corse of Thorwald should rest in the spot which he chose for his burial-place. He sailed in 1005, with his wife and twenty-five men, with the affectionate purpose of bringing back the body to the maternal earth. But the grave of Thorwald was not to be disturbed. The voyage of Thorstein was unlucky. Baffled by contrary winds, he wandered about the ocean during the whole summer, and made Greenland,—"the first week of winter being past." Here a mortality prevails which carries off many of the voyagers, their chief among them. This Saga is marked by some curious details of the northern superstitions.

These voyages open the pathway to Vinland. Other adventurers succeed, whose Sagas are more or less interesting. Among the discoveries of these fearless seamen,—from whom the Anglo-

Norman race undoubtedly derive all their maritime characteristics —is supposed to be that of the influence of the Gulf Stream, which they described as "strong currents." During the autumn of 1007, a man child was born to Gudrid, the widow of Thorstein, who had married another chief. This child received the name of Snorri. He was the first child of European parents born in America, and his birth is remarkable for another reason. Up to this child, the great sculptor, Thorwaldsen, traces his lineage, along with that of many other eminent Scandinavians.

Among the most interesting of the Sagas at this period is that of Thorfinn Karlsefne.—The word Karlsefne signifies "a man who is destined to become great." Thorfinn was an Icelandic merchant of royal descent. His deeds did not belie his nobility. He was a famous voyager, and his discoveries in America were continued for a period of three years, from 1007 to 1010. He married Gudrid, the widow of Thorstein Erikson, and to him it was assigned to carry out the public wishes, in regard to the exploration of the newly discovered countries. "People began to talk greatly that Vinland the good should be explored." Karlsefne, with another chief named Snorri, made ready their ship for departure in the spring. They took with them no less than 160 men. Several of these persons are described, and in characters and colours so genuine, that they seem to rise before us like "old salts,"—such as we may encounter at the present day in any of our sea-ports. Thus, for example, we are told of a man, "Thorhall, who was called the hunter. He had long been with Erik, and served him as huntsman in summer, and steward in winter. He was a large man, and strong; black, and like a giant; silent and foul-mouthed in his speech, and always egged on Erik to the worst. He was a bad Christian. He was well acquainted with foreign parts, and had been in the ship with Thorslein and Thorwald, &c." Such details will illustrate what we suggested at the beginning, that it was a circumstance greatly in favour of the authenticity of these narratives, taken as proofs of the discoveries of the Northmen, that their objects are so generally personal, and the geographical portions of the Saga are so entirely subordinate to the design.

The discoveries of Karlsefne are full of interest. His descriptions of the savages, their manners, modes of traffic and war, cos-

tume, &c., correspond with the language of less questionable narrators five hundred years later. But, though striking and impressive, we forbear his details, and give but a single item from the Saga furnished by his voyage. This is the substance of a tradition well calculated to make us prick up our ears, and open our eyes with expectation. It will lead us to another chronicle of more interest hereafter. It was at Markland, in the third winter of his wanderings, that Karlsefne encountered five Skrœlings, or savages. One of them was a bearded man, two were females, and two were boys. The boys were captured, the man and girls succeeded in escaping. These boys were soon taught to speak the language of the Northmen, and their revelations were new and full of interest. They gave the name of their father as Uvœge, their mother as Vatheldi. They said that their people were ruled by two kings, one of them called Avaldania, the other Valdidida. Their people built no houses, but dwelt in holes and caverns. Beyond them, however, on the other side of a great strait, just opposite their country, *they described the people as being white,—as wearing white garments, carrying flags upon poles, and shouting loudly.* This description recalls to the Northmen an old tradition of their own people; and they come to the conclusion that the country thus described must be one of which they have frequently heard before, and which they called "Hvitramannaland eda Irland ed Mykla," that is, "Whiteman's Land, or Great Ireland!"

Here, then, is a subject-matter upon which the antiquary may pore with profound delight. Here is tradition sufficiently startling to provoke curiosity and wonder, and sufficiently well grounded in authority to induce speculation and research. It is of unquestionable antiquity, and this is in its favour. It commends itself specially to our interest, as it may possibly conduct us hereafter to the secret of our antiquities. The earliest tradition in regard to Whiteman's Land, or Great Ireland, is found in the Landnamabok, A. D. 982. It appears that Ari Marson, one of the fearless adventurers of the northern seas, was driven by a tempest to a country lying west in the sea, near to Vinland the Good, and vi days' (supposed to be xi or xvi days) sailing west from Ireland. This region, according to the calculations of Professor Rafn, must

be that tract of country which is now occupied by the states of South Carolina and Georgia; the course of the vessel, and the situation of the port in Ireland from which she sailed—that of Limerick—leading irresistibly to this calculation.

Here, then, Ari Marson found a white people, such as were described by the two Skrœling boys made captive by Karlsefne; habited in white, carrying banners, and speaking a dialect resembling the Irish, and such as he could understand. Hence was the country styled Whiteman's Land, or Great Ireland. Once in their custody, the people of this region would not suffer Ari Marson to depart. They kept him, christened him, wived him, and made a chief of him; but, fearing another stress of wind in the contrary direction, they took care never to let him go to sea again. This narrative is founded on the statements of Rafn, a merchant of Limerick, Thorfinn, Jarl of the Orkneys, and other credible authorities. The tradition is quite too interesting to be set aside at present, and we forbear the interesting details contained in the further voyages of Karlsefne and Thorhall; of Freydis, Helgi, and Finnbogi,—to say nothing of much other matter of kindred interest and novelty,—but which fails to illustrate the particular subject before us—and hurry to the singular legend of one of the favourite heroes of northern narrative—a story equally interesting in itself, and curious, because of its close connection with the tradition under notice.

II.

THE SAGA OF BJORN ASBRANDSON.

THE HERO OF BREIDAVIK.

This is taken from the Eyrbyggja Saga, or Early Annals of the Western Coast of Iceland—a collection, the date of which is certainly not later than the opening of the thirteenth century. The contents of this Saga, have been carefully collated with numerous manuscripts, by which its authority is confirmed and

strengthened. We skip unnecessary genealogies, and come at once to our hero, Bjorn, son of Asbrand, known accordingly as Bjorn Asbrandson. He was a bard and a warrior, a great sea-captain, a man of warm passions and vigorous frame. These qualities rendered him rash and venturous, and, while yet very young, he had provoked numerous enemies. But he had his friends also. He had a spell by which to secure hearts. Unhappily, he was not always solicitous to win those only whom he might lawfully take to himself. His blood sometimes triumphed over his morality.

There was a great merchant, named Thorodd, who married Thurid, the widow of Thorbjorn the Fat, and sister of Snorri Godi. It was unlucky that Thorodd was something less of a warrior than a merchant—still more unfortunate that he looked not so pleasing in the eyes of Thurid as did the brave young chief Bjorn Asbrandson. The parties grew intimate. Their intercourse became a subject of remark to the people, and of suspicion to Thorodd. He seems to have complained of it to his friends, but did not, like a man, object to it frankly to the offending persons. He was reproached for his imbecility. Thorer Vidlegg, one of his neighbours, with his two sons, both stout and well-grown fellows, being of that class of philanthropists who are apt to look more into the concerns of others than their own, instructed him in the course he should pursue, and were kind enough to proffer him their help. He accepted it, and the parties laid a snare for the sinning but unsuspecting Bjorn.

But the eyes of the wife were not so blind. Her heart was too deeply interested in her lover not to see and to suspect the mischief that was brewing. That Thorodd should now leave her alone with him when he came, was of itself a matter of surprise and alarm; that he should, all of a sudden, seem so utterly indifferent to that intimacy which hitherto had been a source of constant anxiety and discontent, startled all the keen instincts of the feminine nature. She determined to observe him closely; and subtly as he had laid his schemes, and subdued the open expression of his feelings, he could not hide his heart from her scrutiny. Bjorn found her anxious and alone. Her husband was nowhere

to be seen. This was unusual. She drew her lover's attention to the fact. She said to him :

" Beware, Bjorn, for Thorodd means you mischief. Take care of your walks. He seeks to put an end to your visits. I suspect that, even now, he has gone out with others to lay wait for you, and take you at advantage."

The brave and daring fellow smiled at her apprehensions. He answered her with a fearless, and something of an exulting spirit, in the vein and with the language of the bards of the North ; for " he, too, was a poet." His answer comes to us in Runic rhymes, though our version must be in simpler language.

" It may well be that such is his purpose, but here, in the arms of the beloved one, I cannot think of the danger. Do not shorten the day in which I am blessed with such apprehensions. It will come soon enough, the fate which robs me of thee, and dooms thee to deplore my early death."

But the fair, frail woman, though pleased, was not pacified ; and when they finally separated, Bjorn looked carefully to his weapons. It was well he did so ; for he had not far advanced upon his way when five men darted upon him from a covert. These were Thorodd, the husband, two of his servants, and the two stout sons of Thorer Vidlegg. They grappled with Bjorn, but did not entirely succeed in surprising him. This was due to the fears and counsels of Thurid. Five to one were fearful odds, but Bjorn had already won the renown of a hero. His was already a favourite name among his people. He fought for something more than life ; and, though closely pressed, escaped the danger. The two sons of Thorer Vidlegg he slew, and their fate finished the combat. Thorodd, slightly wounded, fled with his two servants. Wounded also, Bjorn made his way home, and stole off to his own chamber. But his mother heard him enter, and sent a maid-servant to attend him. Terrified at seeing him covered with blood, the girl hurried back and described his condition. This brought his father, Asbrand, to his apartment.

" You have fallen in with Thorodd," said the old man.

" Even so ;" was the answer.

" And how ended the business ?"

The reply of Bjorn was chaunted after the fashion of the sea-kings:

"It is far easier to fondle a fair woman than to wrestle with a valiant man. I have wounded Thorodd, and slain the two sons of Vidlegg."

His mother bound up his wounds, which were not serious; but the matter did not end here. Thorodd, with Snorri Godi, his brother-in-law, brought the death of Vidlegg's sons before the court of Thorness. The upshot of the trial was, that Asbrand went security for his son's good behaviour, and paid a heavy fine, while Bjorn went into banishment for three years. That summer, Thurid, the guilty woman, became the mother of a male child, of large and promising appearance, to whom they gave the name of Kjartan; but who was the boy's father, was the question.

Meanwhile, the exiled hero crossed the sea to Norway, went southward to Denmark, and from thence to Jomsburg. Jomsburg was a strong castle, built by the Danish king, Harold Blaataand, on the coast of Pomerania. Here Bjorn joined the community of Vikings, by which the place was kept, under the command of a famous chief called Palnatoki. This band of warriors were particularly famous, even in that day and region, for their fierce valour and hardy contempt of death. Their laws were of the strictest character—their tests of merit of the most exacting description. Bjorn soon proved his right to be of their order, and quickly won, by his great qualities as a warrior, the rank of Kappi, or champion of the band. The deeds by which he obtained this distinction are not necessary to this narrative.

His fame preceded him in his return from banishment. Bjorn Asbrandson, the champion of Breidavik, was everywhere welcomed with admiration. His tastes were magnificent, and the pomp of his equipage, costume, and style—in which he imitated the habits of the daring warriors with whom he had dwelt—drew upon him still more the admiring regards of his own simpler people. Of a person at once handsome and powerful, he adopted the courtly habits and usages of foreign chiefs. Skilled in all exercises, he was everywhere conspicuous by his bearing; and proud, in his growth, and exuberance of blood, of his personal claims to regard, he did not withhold himself from the popular gaze on great occa-

sions which drew the multitude together. It was unfortunate that he did not withhold himself from the sight of other eyes, into which it was not so innocent for him to gaze.

It was in the summer first succeeding his return from banishment that a great gathering of the people was held near the mouth of the Froda. The occasion was one of great display, and drew together multitudes of both sexes. All went in their best caparison. The costume at such gatherings was always particularly rich. That of the champion of Breidavik may be supposed to have excelled his ordinary displays of grandeur. Thurid was there also—the lady of his guilty love. The lovers again met. Bjorn approached her, spoke to her, and their conversation was uninterrupted. The husband does not appear to have been present to arrest their freedoms by his suspicions. The people seem rather to have sympathized with the offending parties. The champion was a favourite ; and perhaps they thought that Thurid, the widow of a sea chief, was unwisely matched with a selfish tradesman, upon whom they had conferred the epithet of tribute-buyer—alluding to a transaction in which he had exacted compensation for doing an act of simple humanity. Long did Thurid and Bjorn converse together. They had many things to relate. While the interview lasted, there arose a fight, in which a mountaineer received a mortal wound. This event was followed by an occurrence, in which the boy Kjartan, the son of Thurid, declared convincingly to all around who was his real father. Armed with a tiny axe—such a plaything as a Viking's son might well prefer over all others—the boy ran to the spot where the man was slain, and dipped the weapon in his blood! When the parties separated, and Bjorn was riding southwards with his friend Thord Blig, the latter asked him if he had seen the action of the lad Kjartan.

"I did," said Bjorn."

"And what think you of it, and of him?" was the farther question.

"As of a stripling, who, with the features of a woman, and in the lair of the wolf, proves that a Viking was his father. But of this the people say he knows nothing."

"What will Thorodd say when he hears the story?"

Bjorn smiled, and gave his answer in song :

"Thurid will say, pressing the lad to her bosom, that her husband had reason for all his fears."

"It will be much better for ye both," said the friend, "that you have little to do with each other. Turn thy thoughts from Thurid, Bjorn."

"Good counsel, but not so easy," said the champion.

"You will repent these doings," answered Thord.

"I have no fears of Thorodd," said the other; "but there is some difference when I have to do with such a man as Snorri Godi, her brother."

Thus the conference ended. It proved the passion of the lovers to be too strong still to be controlled by ordinary suggestions of prudence; and in a short time the champion resumed his visits to Thurid. His dwelling was at Kamb, the former residence of his father, who was now dead. We are not told what space divided him from his sweetheart; but he had to cross a melancholy tract of heath in approaching her habitation. Thorodd was no better pleased with his visits than before; but his failure in the attempt upon the life of Bjorn, and the danger which he had then incurred, led him to think of a very different mode of getting rid of the disturber of his peace. It was the age, and Iceland was the region, over all, where magic ruled triumphant in the popular faith. The witch or wizard possessed a genuine sway in the heart of the Northman. Thorodd consulted one of this class. Thorgrim Galdrakin was a master in his order. He agreed to raise a tempest against Bjorn while he was crossing the heath, which should destroy him. He was to be suffered to visit the lady, and it was on his return that the storm was to assail him. We shall not trouble ourselves to inquire what share the magician Thorgrim Galdrakin had in the tempest which surrounded our hero's footsteps when he left the dwelling of Thurid. But Bjorn was full of the superstitions of his people. He believed in witchcraft; and what one believes has necessarily a power over him, for good or for evil. The weather darkened in his progress. The skies grew thick with rain; the night was black; the hour was late; and when Bjorn was fairly on the heath, he was enveloped in a snow storm. He could no longer see the way before him. The drift of snow was such, and so mingled with sleet, that he could scarcely keep his

legs. His garments were frozen about him ; and in this condition he wandered about for several hours, in great peril, until he found himself at the mouth of a cave—some friendly genius, perhaps, who could not baffle the spells of the wizard, thus kindly assisting him to elude them. Here the champion found shelter ; a melancholy one, for he was cold, and weary, and without food. But his courage had not deserted him. He knew, or believed, that he was assailed by the spells of the wizard, bought by the gold of the husband whom he had dishonoured ; but his solace lay in the enthusiastic spirit of the scald. The bardic genius of his country brought him consolation ; and he chaunted through the night his wild runes, whenever the cold wakened him to a painful consciousness, or when he would baffle its numbing and paralyzing tendencies. Some fragments of the songs he chaunted are preserved to us. Among the duties of hospitality, entrusted more particularly to the women of a Northern family, is that of bringing dry garments to the traveller. He at once recals the comfort he cannot enjoy ; as, in the language of Rousseau, one loves to paint the spring when it snows, and to dream of liberty in the walls of a dungeon. "Fair one"—thus sings our Northern Viking, half palsied with his sleety garments—

"Fair one, who dost bear,
Vestments to the weary,
Little know'st thou where,
Close in dwelling dreary,
He that once o'er ocean,
Drove the fearless bark,
Now, with feeble motion,
Lies in cavern dark."

Another struggle against the apathy growing upon his limbs, produces another chaunt in the same vein, though with somewhat varied measure.

"I that have traversed the cold empire of the swan, the sea—that have gone eastward with the goodliest freight—that have braved the tempest, and sought the embrace of danger in the heady currents of the Spear,—and all for the love of woman—Alas! for me, no couch of woman is prepared—the cold chamber of the rock alone receives my limbs."

And thus, cold and feeble, without food, or fire, or light, our Viking was kept for three days; his courage strengthened by his songs, and his heart sustained by its own elastic impulses. The storm which the wizard had raised, being assumed—we may suppose—to have worked its purpose, was allowed to moderate on the fourth day. Then he went home, much exhausted, to Kamb. The servants asked him where he had been housed during the tempest, and his answer—still embodied in the rude chaunt which was so common a faculty with the Northmen of this period—rather declared his mortification that so great a warrior as himself should have been unable to contend with the powers of the wizard.

"Are not my deeds known to you? Fought I not under the banner of Styrbjorn, when the steel-clad warriors were overthrown! Yet could I not escape the spells of the witches, caught by the magic shower in the wild passes of the hills."

Our hero remained quiet during the winter, but the evil was already done. The resumption of his visits to Thurid, which her timid husband had so completely failed to prevent or punish, had goaded the latter to desperation. With the summer he made a feast, and called to it his brother-in-law, Snorri Godi, with twenty men. He disclosed to him the renewal of his wrongs at the hands of Bjorn, the champion, and demanded that he should furnish a remedy against the ill-doings of his sister. They remained in consultation together several days. Thorodd, the husband, made him many costly presents, for he was a man of great wealth. Snorri Godi was a man of courage and honour. He felt the necessity of putting a stop to the scandal in relation to Thurid. But he kept his plans to himself until he had separated from Thorodd. When he left the latter, he gave out that he was going to his ship in the bay of Raunhafn, this being in an opposite direction to Kamb, where dwelt the champion. As soon, however, as he had left the house of Thorodd fairly behind him, he said to his followers, twenty in number,

"Now shall we ride down to Kamb, where I purpose to take the life of Bjorn Asbrandson. We must watch our chance, and not attack him in his house. The buildings are strong, Bjorn hardy and valiant, and we have no great force. Besides, it is well

known, that men who have come in force, assailing those who keep within doors, have fought with little profit against valiant men. There is the adventure of Geir Godi and Gissier the Pale. They, with eighty men, attacked Gunnar of Liderend, who was in his house alone, yet he slew and wounded many of his enemies, and had utterly baffled and beaten them off but that his weapons failed him. But, as it is now the season of haymaking, and good drying weather, we may look to find our champion in the fields. There we must surround him. I appoint thee, my kinsman Mar, to fetch Bjorn the first wound. But consider well ere you strike, for he is no man to trifle with. If he receives not such a wound as will disable him, you may look for such danger at his hands as from the fury of a wounded wolf."

Their plans laid and understood, they pushed onwards to the farm of Bjorn, and, even as they anticipated, they found him in the fields, busy with the sled in which the hay was drawn out. He was alone, and had no weapons except a little axe, and a large knife, a span in length from the haft. These, indeed, were simply farmer's implements. Thus far, all turned out as the conspirators expected, and they evidently had our hero at disadvantage. But it is never certain when the odds are fairly against a brave man, who has a genius for war also. Such a person has resources of thought and action which are never entirely foreseen. He is never taken wholly at disadvantage. Bjorn was a quick-sighted warrior. He beheld and knew his enemies almost as soon as they discovered him. 'He who rides in front,' said the champion to himself,—'with the blue cloak—he is Snorri Godi.' His resolve was immediate. He did not wait their approach—but, taking his knife, he went straight towards the party. As they drew together, he suddenly seized the arm of Snorri's cloak with one hand, while with the other he so held his knife as to be able to pierce the breast of Snorri, should anything provoke him to do so. In this position the two exchanged civil greetings, while Mar, the kinsman of Snorri, stopped his uplifted hand, forbearing to use his weapon, as he saw that any attempt to do so would be certainly fatal to his leader. The energy, promptness, and skill of Bjorn—practised in all the feats and tricks of war—thus gave him an opportunity to prescribe the terms of mutual release. He was a

frank and generous fellow with all his vices. Clinging to Snorri, as the other attempted to go forward, Bjorn took up the discourse without any attempt at evasion.

"It stands truly thus, friend Snorri, that I have not borne myself towards you in such wise, but you may well accuse me; and I have been told that you have a hostile purpose towards me. Now, it seems to me best, that, if you have any business with me, other than that of passing me upon the highway, you should give me notice of your intentions. If that be not the case, then would I that you grant me peace, and I will then turn back, for you know I am not the man to go in leading-strings." Snorri answered with equal frankness;—"Such a lucky gripe didst thou take of me at our meeting, that thou must needs have peace this time, however it may have been determined otherwise before. But this I beg of thee, that, from henceforth, thou cease to inveigle Thurid, for it will not end well with us if thou continue in this respect, as thou hast begun."

The answer of Bjorn to this entreaty, conveyed the strength of his passion, and the conviction of his own weakness.

"That only will I promise thee which I can perform; but I see not how I could hold to this, so long as Thurid and I are in the same district." "Thou art not so much bound to this place," answered Snorri, "but that thou couldst easily leave it for another." With the reflections of a moment, the manlier feelings of Bjorn became triumphant. The justness of Snorri's demand appealed forcibly to his conscience. The suggestion struck him with new force, and found favour in his sight. Perhaps, he felt also that he could not always baffle the vengeance of an injured husband;—could not always contend successfully against his myrmidons. It may be, that he had also become sated with his criminal indulgences, and that his roving and adventurous spirit had become impatient of the tame life of the farmer which he was pursuing. At all events, by whatever considerations he may have been governed, he answered the counsel of Snorri in a manner to satisfy the latter.

"It is true what thou sayest, and thus shall it be, since you have thus spoken to me. Thorodd and thou shalt have no more trouble about my visits to Thurid."

The day following, Bjorn rode to Raunhöfn, where he found a ship, and was soon ready for departure. He put to sea with a north-east wind, "which wind lasted during the summer; but of this ship," says the ancient chronicle, "was nothing heard since this long time." Thus quaintly ends the narrative from which our summary is made, but thus ends not the story of our champion. So gallant a Viking is not to go out of the world by a puff of north-east wind, even though it lasts the summer long; and in proof of this we cite the story of another chief.

III.

THE SAGA OF GUDLEIF GUDLAUGSON.

Gudleif was the son of Gudlaug the Rich. He was a great merchant, a profession which, in those days, implied an active commerce carried on in person upon the high seas. He owned a merchant vessel, and, in the last years of the reign of Olaf, the Saint, made a trading voyage to Ireland. This was A. D. 1029, some thirty years after the disappearance from his country of Bjorn Asbrandson, the Great Champion of Breidavik. Sailing, on his return voyage, from a port in the west of Ireland, which is conjectured to be Limerick—a port much frequented by the Northmen—Gudleif met "with north-east winds, and was driven far to the west and south-west, in the sea, where no land was to be seen." But Gudleif, like a good Christian, fell to prayers, "and it came to pass that they saw land. It was a great land, but they knew not what land it was. Then took they the resolve to sail to the land, for they were weary of contending longer with the violence of the sea. They found there a good harbour, and when they had been a short time on the shore, came people to them. They knew none of the people, *but it rather appeared to them that they spoke Irish.* Soon came to them so great a number that it made up many hundreds. These men fell upon them and seized them all, and bound them and drove them up into the country. Then were they brought before an assembly

to be judged." The Icelanders *understood enough of the language in which the captors discussed their fate, to discover that some were for putting them to death, others for distributing them and subjecting them to slavery.* But whilst the matter was yet pending, they beheld where rode a large and dignified man, who was much in years, and whose hair was white. To this man a very marked deference is paid by the people of the country. He is received with many outward shows of homage, and the question, touching the fate of the captives, is, in some degree, submitted to his decision. This old man speaks to the Icelanders in the Northern tongue. He asks them whence they come. They answer that most of them are Icelanders. He demands that some of Iceland shall be particularly pointed out to him. Gudlief, the chief of the expedition, presents himself accordingly. The old man examines him with marked interest, and asks to know from what portion of Iceland he comes. Gudleif answers, "from the district hight Borgafjord." The stranger chief betrays an intimate acquaintance with Borgafjord, and proceeds to ask after nearly all of the principal persons in that place, and in Breidafjord ;—"and when they talked thereon, enquired he minutely about everything, first of Snorri Godi, and his sister Thurid of Froda, and most about Kjartan, her son." These persons, it will be recollected, are those with whom Bjorn Asbrandson made himself too familiar, in former pastimes, as well in love as in hate. But too much time is not allowed them to go over these pleasant reminiscences. The people of the country become impatient, and suspicious of a conference between the strangers conducted in an unknown dialect. They demand an instant decision upon their fate ; and the venerable chief finds it his policy to comply with their demands. Withdrawing himself, therefore, from the Northmen, he selected *twelve men* from the multitude,* who went aside, and sat with himself in secret conference. The discussion

* The trial by jury, and indeed most of those proofs of civilization, which we have been accustomed to ascribe to the Saxons, and to their favourite king, Alfred, are supposed to be traceable to the Northmen. For a highly interesting examination of this subject, read the late work, the "Sea-kings of Norway," by Mr. Laing, whose arguments, if not conclusive, are in most cases exceedingly plausible.

was continued for some time. It would seem to have been one of considerable difficulties. When he rejoins the Northmen he addresses them in the following language:

"I have talked with the people of the country about your business, and they have left the matter to me; and I give ye leave to depart whither ye will. Yet must you immediately remove from hence: let not the lateness of the summer discourage ye. The people here are not to be trusted—are hard to manage; and they think, moreover, that their laws have been broken to their injury by your coming."

Gudleif answers: "What shall we say, should fate permit us to reach our country in safety, of him who has given us our freedom?"

The reply of the old chief is instant and discouraging: "That will I not tell you. I do not wish to be followed by friends or relatives. They would only incur the fate from which I have saved you with difficulty. I could not hope to succour them in like manner. My years are now so much advanced that I may expect every hour that old age will overcome me; yet, even could I live for a time, I am not supreme in this country. There are chieftains here, though they be not just now in this neighbourhood, who are far more powerful than myself. They would show little mercy to the stranger."

Only too glad to escape with whole bones himself, Gudleif quells his curiosity, and proceeds to put his ship in order for the voyage. The aged chief attends him during these preparations, and the Northmen are assisted in getting ready by the people of the country. When they are ready to depart, the old man, taking Gudleif aside, puts into his hands a gold ring and a sword, with these words: "Should the Fates permit you to reach your own country, then shall you take this sword to the yeoman Kjartan, of Froda, and the ring to his mother, Thurid." "What shall I tell them," demands Gudleif, "when they shall ask who sends them these valuables?" "Say that he who sends them was a better friend to the lady of Froda than of her brother Snorri Godi of Helgafell. But if any man, therefore, thinks that he knows who has owned these articles, then say that I forbid any one to seek after me; for the expedition is most dangerous, unless it happens as fortunately

to them at the landing-place as it has done with you. The land is of great extent, the shores afford few good harbours, and in all parts may the stranger expect hostility."

And thus they parted. Gudleif returned home in safety, and delivered the presents of the ancient chief to those for whom they were destined; and "people held it for certain that this man was none other than Bjorn Asbrandson, the champion of Breidavik," a conjecture that will strike every reader of the narrative who remembers that Thurid, to whom the ring was sent, had been his mistress, and that Kjartan, who received the gift of the sword, was the lad who proved the Vikingr to be his sire by dipping his infant hatchet in the blood of the murdered man at the great gathering at Haugabret.

IV.

THE WHITE MAN,—NORTHMAN OR IRISH,—IN AMERICA.

Whatever may be our uncertainty, in regard to American antiquities, it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that we owe them to a race, or races, other than the red men who were found by the Spaniards in the country. They furnish proofs of a large progress in civilization, such as were not in possession of the Indians at the coming of Columbus—and such as, if once possessed by any people, they could scarcely have lost by any forfeiture of political privilege, or by any overthrow of the national independence. The arts, as we too well know, are apt to survive the freedom of a nation, whose history they may yet fondly seek to perpetuate. Political, and even social liberty, do not seem to be essential to their vitality. On the contrary, the highest proofs which genius has ever furnished of her resources, have been found to exhibit themselves in the midst of nations who have undergone political emasculation. The arts, once in existence, are of a much hardier nature than is usually supposed to belong to them; and actually

derive some degree of their hardihood and muscle from the pressure which a state of social degradation necessarily brings along with it. Their moral strength is drawn from their burdens, and the grief which glooms the general aspect in the works of genius, is quite as much the sign of that capacity for a degree of endurance, which seems to be essential to her vigour, as it is of any inherent characteristics of her own nature. Her flowers are watered by her tears;—her fruits are but too frequently the fruits of denial rather than of sunshine. The genius of an oppressed people, who have once been civilized and distinguished, is apt to become more pure, vivid, and even energetic, in the midst of bonds, than it ever proved itself in the day of its conscious freedom; and nature, in this manner, seems to provide a compensative endowment, as well to console the suffering race in its privations, as to elevate the self-respect, and thus to prepare the mind of its people for the efforts proper to their recovery of position. As the genius of the individual man becomes refined by trial, and grows at length into a noble and religious gravity, so that of a people, subdued to humiliation by a sense of inferiority, chastened by its overthrow, and the restraints of its new condition, acquires strength for future greatness in the very necessity of endurance, to which it yields passively and without a struggle. Patient working and waiting, in the one case as in the other, is apt, in the progress of events, to emancipate both, and to crown the virtue which submits, even while it struggles, with the triumph which is its proper boon and birthright. The genius of the Jews, the Saxons, the Irish, and the Italians, has suffered no diminution, but has acquired rather a large increase of its natural powers, by the subjection which, at different stages in the progress of these several nations, they have been made to undergo. Song and strength followed the Egyptian bondage of the Hebrew. The philosopher and the poet, the lawgiver and the warrior, were born among the children of Israel in the clay-pits of the Egyptian. The Saxon, in all probability, obtained his first lessons, as well of war as of civilization, from the invasions of the northern sea-kings, as, in after periods, he rose into the highest rank of humanity, by the scourge and the bondage to which he was held in the grasp of the superior genius of another portion of the same conquering stock.

If Italy and Ireland do not yet challenge their political emancipation, with the adequate energy with which to procure their object, it is satisfactory to know that the genius of the respective people has not died out, and does not slumber, but exhibits that subtlety, vigilance, and general restiveness, which are the usual signs of a presence in the hearts of their people, upon which humanity may always build with liveliest hopes of the future. But it will answer our present purpose to insist upon these four nations as remarkably illustrative of the truth, that a people may lose every political right or possession without impairing, in any substantial degree, the strength and vitality of its intellectual nature. The captive poet will sing with a sadder melody, perhaps; but he will still sing: the painter will still achieve his picture, and it shall not be less fresh and beautiful than in the days of his nation's superiority and safety, though heavier clouds and a deeper tone may give a gloomier aspect to his landscape: the genius that has once wrought nobly, will still be capable of as noble work, though with a less youthful and exulting spirit. Neither his own memories nor the will of the conqueror, unless the latter be wholly barbarous, will deny to the captive or the slave the melancholy privilege of still exercising his genius in the creation of the exquisite in art and fancy. The memory of the bondsman will turn to past exercises for its consolation; and the very selfishness of the conqueror will encourage the art which adds necessarily to his own trophies. The Babylonian tyrant called for the songs of Judah in his captivity: and, though the captive denied that he could sing in his exile, yet his harp poured forth its most exquisite harmonies while uttering the very language of its denial.

The conclusion from these premises, apart from any traditions, would be adverse to the idea that the red men of America were the source of its antiquities. That portion of the North American continent which is now occupied by the people of Anglo-Norman origin was, at the first coming of the Spaniards, in the possession of a wild, fresh population, as savage as the beasts upon which they preyed. They could exhibit not only no present possessions of civilization, but it is very certain that they had never been subjected by the hands of a master. They had evidently lost no moral possessions. They exhibited no proofs of emerging,

remote or recent, from a state of bondage; but were a wild, untamed, and, seemingly, untameable race, to whom the arts of civilized man were wholly unfamiliar. They had, it is true, natural endowments of the largest description. They had the rich materials of song and eloquence in store. They were a people like the Romans—a fierce democracy, whose passion was conquest, and who needed a certain degree of physical exhaustion before they could be subdued to a consciousness of the sweet and glorious in art which were yet to be evolved from their own secret nature. But, whatever may have been the endowments of the stock for future developement, their whole story tells against the notion that they were the proprietors of the antiquities found in their possession. They had neither tools nor artificers. They had no dense communities needing large cities or fortifications; and it is absurd to suppose that a wandering people should ever cultivate a taste for possessions which they cannot carry along with them. They had no agriculture; and the cultivation of the earth must precede every other step in civilization, by making a people stationary. The vast mounds, the extended lines of fortification, the great excavations, the covered ways—certain proofs of which still appear in numerous parts of our continent—indicate a dense and stationary population—a people in possession of a considerable degree of science, accustomed to labour, possessed of its implements, and with the consciousness of a vital danger at hand, and threatening, which they endeavoured but vainly to avert. So much is clearly inferrible from the works which they have left behind them. These works were in the country at the coming of the Spaniards—were not works in the use of the red man—which he knew not how to use—which did not suit his modes of warfare, or his modes of life, and must have belonged to a race having, at the same time, far greater endowments and far greater necessities—by whom he was preceded, and whom he, in all probability, not only overthrew, but massacred. A protracted struggle, such as a vastly superior and proud, though feeble people, probably opposed to a barbarian invader, would naturally end in the utter annihilation of the former. The traditions of the North American savages are to this effect. The several Indian tribes of Apalachia boasted themselves to be invaders of the country.

They described themselves as conquerors—described the people whom they overthrew as vastly superior in civilization to their own; and some of them, the Shawanee (Chowannee?) for example, asserted them to have been a *white people, in the possession of iron or metallic implements*. Numerous corresponding traditions speak to the same effect. A curious and highly beautiful legend, of the Bay of Biloxi, almost enforces this history; and a tradition of the people of Powhatan, on the borders of the Potomac, represented one of their greatest monarchs as coming, while yet an infant, from the forests of the remote southwest.

If we turn our eyes to Central and to South America, there is a parallel history. The evidences of civilization in these regions are of a like nature with those which we find east of the Mississippi, but they betray a more decided and various character. They denote the same prompt performing and capable hand, but exhibit much more detail, a greater ambition, and a far more admirable finish. The fabrics of Central America and Mexico declare a people in repose, and in possession of security. Their works of art are much more impressive, and more durable; denoting leisure as well as art, wealth, and undoubted position, not less than capacity and taste. These facts—assuming the structures in both regions to have issued from the same hands—would show that the people of the latter countries had been longer in possession of the soil than those who occupied the country north of the Mississippi—would show that they were conscious of no such exigencies as pressed upon the former people. They seem to have been surprised in their high places of security, in their noonday slumbers, at their temples and firesides, but not upon their walls and fortresses. We may reasonably suppose them expelled by the sudden and terrible inroad of vast swarms of savages, who laughed at their luxuries, and surprised them in the midst of their effeminate delights. The history is that of the northern hive of Europe, falling sudden and terrible, in the force of savage strength and uncounted numbers, upon the luxurious provinces of Italy—a race who carried with them their wives and children to the combat, and pitched their tents, and colonized the battle-field which they had made fat with the blood of carnage. Expelled from their pleasant homes, we may follow the footsteps of the

fugitives, growing desperate in flight, growing hardier in a new life of trial, and wandering away in scattered bands, seeking places of repose and refuge—struggling, when pursued, by help of earthen barriers rapidly thrown up, to retard the pursuit of their more powerful enemies, and to obtain a temporary respite from assaults which they could not hope to endure. Step by step, in this manner—each step distinguished by its earthen fortress—we find them passing to the East, from the waters of the Pacific and the Gulf, to the vast barriers of the Atlantic, which denied that they should travel farther. And here their traces have been lost. Here, with the first proofs of a certain European history, we find the vestiges of a race which does not appear. In their place we encounter only the grim warriors of Apalachia—the fierce chiefs of the Muscoghee and the Mississippi, against whom the Iberian chivalry of De Soto and Ponce de Leon urged their mail-clad warriors in vain. These were no soldiers made effeminate by the superior arts and luxuries of civilization. They had lost none of the original vigour of their frames—none of the original force of blood, by their adoption of the pleasant and flowery bonds of society. They had drank no enfeebling beverages. They had known no emasculating arts. They were an original stock, who were only too soon to be overcome by the temptations which civilization had never offered them before. A nation that has once possessed the arts of peace, never retains those of war after the former have been lost.

Here, stretching along the shores of the Gulf, from Mississippi to the Atlantic—following the course of the former river until it intersects with the Missouri, the Ohio, and other waters—we find still the earthen traces of the fugitives in mound and fortification. Here, in the brief pauses which were allowed them by their pursuing enemies, they threw up their little ramparts, and raised temporary altar-places, in honour of those feeble gods, who could not preserve them in their homes. The mounds of Apalachia are probably in humble imitation of the great teocallis of Central America—the one being raised of earth, in a country which had no rock, and where little leisure was allowed the builders; the other of more durable materials, gathered at a time of leisure, from vast and convenient storehouses in contiguous mountains. Some of

these mounds and artificial works of earth along the Atlantic are actually to be found, deeply hidden in the dense fastnesses of the swamp. Here, then, they must have been chosen for the refuge and secrecy which they afforded. On these altars they raised their feeble fires, trembling all the while lest the rising smokes should betray them to their enemies. Why, if a people were not accustomed to an elevated region, should they raise artificial mounds for worship? Why, if they were not in dread of foes, should they raise these altars of religion which all people are proud to exhibit, in an unwholesome and difficult region of the swamp and thicket? We may safely infer that the mound-builders were a race who had been accustomed to a mountain region. With equal safety we may assume that they occupied the territories of Apalachia, with the consciousness of a pressing danger at their heels. To such a tribe, thus apprehensive, the sudden appearance of a strange people in their front, while the savages of Apalachia were following close behind them, would naturally be productive of a new terror; and the equally fearful Northmen, under Gudleif Gudlaugsen, might well congratulate themselves when they were taken prisoners by a race of white men in the territories lying between the Savannah and the Chesapeake, that they had a friend at court, in the person of a favourite hero, who could interpose, at the proper moment, and save them from death or bondage. Tradition, reason, and the general aspect of the case, bring us to regard some such as the probable history.

If, then, the antiquities of America, the teocallis of Central America and Mexico, and the mounds and fortifications of Apalachia, are thus the work of a people other than, and superior to, those by whom all these regions were occupied at the coming of the Spaniards, the question that next occurs to us is, Were these a white people? We have already given the tradition of the Northmen;—a tradition, we repeat, derived from evidence which almost entitles it to be called and considered a history. We have also glanced at a tradition of the Apalachian Indians, whose pride was wholly derived from their warlike properties, and whose boast it was to have, only within a brief though uncertain period, conquered the previous possessors of the country, whom they represented as a white and highly civilized people. We have

only to advert to European traditions, such as that of the Welshman, Madoc—and, *par parenthese*, we may ask, if there were not such an affinity between the dialect of the Welshman and that of the Irish, as might enable one familiar with the former, in some degree to comprehend the language of the latter? Then, we are not to forget what is said of the vague accounts which reached Columbus from various sources, of a new continent;—not to forget that he visited Iceland in 1477—had access to the archives of the island, and must have heard of the former discoveries of its roving sea-chiefs. The Sagas of the Northmen, from which we have quoted, were then on record, and were in all probability studied carefully by the adventurous Genoese. This does not lessen the merits of Columbus, nor do we refer to it for this purpose, but simply to show a frequent concurrence of tradition, in a matter the clues to which must depend, in a great degree, upon the sincerity and boldness with which the investigation is pursued. We find, in brief, that the Northmen, the Welsh, the Italians, the Irish, and other maritime nations, were more or less impressed with the conviction of remote and unknown countries, lying in the direction of the western continent, and occupied by a white people, who were distinguished by a certain progress in civilization, hundreds of years before the actual opening of the seals by the hands of Columbus. And these traditions are sustained by the proofs of civilization contained in the new world, and by the traditions of a barbarous race occupying it, who were themselves wholly unequal to their exhibition.

To this assumption, we are conscious that there is dissent. It is plausibly claimed for the Mexicans, who were in possession at the time of the Spanish conquest, that they were the proprietors of the trophies of art contained in the country—that they were the architects and builders—and that the amount of art obviously in their possession at the time, was such as to justify the conclusion that they were wholly equal to the erection of the ancient cities which even then occupied the land. To this we shall advert hereafter. It is sufficient in this place to declare our conviction that this could not be the case, for various reasons—that the antiquities were too widely scattered over the country—that this fact alone precludes the probability of their being the work

of a cruel despotism—that the religious rites of the Mexicans were too barbarous for the asserted degree of civilization—that their constant wars, and human sacrifices, were inconsistent with the refinement which such works attest—that they had but too recently achieved their conquest of the country to have given so much of their leisure to such achievements, which are equally those of peace as of civilization—that they were without shipping, which in the case of a people living long upon the shores of two oceans, who had been successful in some of the boldest specimens of architecture, is scarcely within the compass of belief; and that their tastes, pursuits, luxuries and amusements were those of a race, just rising into the appreciation of arts to which they have fallen heirs by conquest, and the true proprietors of which they have probably banished or destroyed. We look upon the Aztec race as having conquered the country of the superior people,—to have caught up such arts as the fugitives left behind them in their haste—to have occupied such of their cities as suited their purpose, and to have abandoned such as they could not well maintain, because of their remoteness. The Tlascalans and other tribes, belonged probably to the Aztec family, but, under rival chiefs, became detached, and, the common enemy withdrawn, made war upon one another. The characteristics of the several tribes are the same, and their conflicts with each other were rather for the fairer possessions which some of them had obtained, than because of hostile principles, or the indulgence of adverse and differing habits. We find the Mexicans in possession of the salt, and monopolists of its trade,—provoking, by this means, the warfare of their neighbours. That portion of the family by which the immediate valley of Mexico was occupied, naturally increased its numbers by the gradual absorption of tributaries to whom its affluence was desirable; and, in proportion as it obtained the ascendency of numbers, so it began the conquest of more remote and independent branches of the original family. But we content ourselves with the simple suggestion, in order to pass on to certain curious traditions, which go to confirm the presence of a white people, at an early date, upon the western continent. These proofs are furnished to our hands by the volume before us.

We forbear quoting from the work of Mr. Beamish, those portions which seek to strengthen his case by proofs of the strange similarities which are to be found in the dialects of certain of our Indian tribes, to that of the Irish people. Curious passages are given from various authors, and a whole string of Indian and of Irish words compels us to find, in one, the root of the other. These are quite remarkable, and will help the philological antiquarian in prosecuting those discoveries on the very edge of which our century seems to stand. Some very curious particulars are accumulated from the narrative of one Lionel Wafer, who lived for several months among the Indians of the Isthmus of Darien. These tend, however indirectly, to give body to the suggestions of Professor Rafn; and go to show, at least, that there were races of people in the country, preceding the Indians whom we know, and who were remarkably unlike them in manners, language and costume. We take from this narrative of Wafer, one remarkable passage, which, though it relates to a people, at that period, occupying Darien, furnishes, at the same time, some singular coincidences with the notice given by the Northmen, of the inhabitants of "Whiteman's Land."

"They have a sort of long cotton garment of their own, some *white*, others of a rusty black, shaped like our carter's frocks, hanging down to their heels, with fringe of the same of cotton, about a span long, and short, wide, open sleeves, reaching but to the middle of the arms. These garments they put on over their heads. When they are thus assembled, they will sometimes walk about the place, or plantation, where they are, with these their robes on; and I once saw Lacenta (a chief) thus walking about, with two or three hundred of these attending him, as if he was mustering them; and I took notice that those in the black gowns walked before him, *and the white after him, each having their lances of the same colour with their robes.* They were all in their finest robes, which are *long white gowns*, reaching to their ancles, with fringes at the bottom, and in their hands they had half-pikes."

Lionel Wafer, it may be well to mention, is one of Dr. Robertson's authorities, and is described by that historian as "a traveller of curiosity and intelligence." No doubt is expressed or entertained of his claims to respect and confidence.

Wafer remarks a wonderful affinity between the spoken language of the people of Darien, and that of the Highlands of Scotland. He says:—"In my youth I was well acquainted with

the Highland or primitive Irish language, particularly at the Navan upon the Boyne, and about the town of Virgini upon Lough Rammer, in the barony of Castle Raghen, in the county of Cavan —and I learned a great deal of the Darien language in a month's conversation with them"—the Indians. Wafer, it must be remembered, had never heard of the traditions of the Northmen, and has no theories to sustain. He starts with no preconceived doctrines, and what he says is the casual utterance of a traveller, who is simply struck with the coincidences which he puts on record. He mentions several affinities in the signification of words, manner of pronouncing them, and the particular twang or accent,—to say nothing of such resemblances as arise from peculiar modes of computation—which his familiarity with the Highlands of Scotland, enables him to understand, and which remind him irresistibly of the people of that region. Curious statements of the same nature are made by British writers of eminence in the seventeenth century. The "Turkish Spy," speaking of the early European settlers in America, says—"There is a region in that continent inhabited by a people whom they call Tuscarards and Doegs. *Their language is the same as is spoken by the British or Welsh.*" The same writer asserts, that, in this region, occupied by these tribes, "*the British language is so prevalent, that the very towns, bridges, beasts, birds, rivers, hills, &c. are called by British or Welsh names.*" The writer of this valuable and curious work was an Italian—John Paul Marana. He could have no motive for making a case for the Irish or the Welshman. The Mexican tradition was, that they were taught in all they knew, of religion and art, by a strange people, who formerly came to *their country in corraughs*. It might be a subject productive of valuable results, to ascertain in what degree the religion of the Mexicans resembled that of the ancient Druids, or that of the Irish before the dawning of Christian civilization. The wild and cruel superstitions of the Druids, their stern, severe and mystic rites, might, with some modifications, such as the change of climate and the acquisition of strange arts would naturally induce, well furnish the models for the terrible sacrifices and gloomy superstitions of the Mexicans.

If then, the western continent furnished abodes for a white and

comparatively civilized people, prior to the discovery of Columbus, the question occurs whether this people were Irish; and a first inquiry which succeeds to this will determine the degree of probability upon which this theory rests. What was the history of the early Irish, and in how far were they likely to become adventurers by sea? Modern times do not recognize them as a mercantile people, though we find them scattered over the surface of the globe. Such, however, seems not always to have been the case. The Irish claim to have been among the people upon whom civilization dawned, long in advance of the surrounding nations. Numerous pages of the work before us, are given to an array of proofs which are irresistible, that Ireland possessed the most ample means in shipping, and was foremost at an early period in the work of colonizing distant countries. However incapable and feeble now, she is shown to have been, at one time, equally energetic and able in her progresses upon the sea. Her intellectual superiority to most nations,—unless we except the Saracens—was then conspicuous, and is now unquestionable. Her learning furnished a storehouse, whence the continent of Europe drew its supplies. As far back as the eighth century, we are told by Moore, "that the high reputation of the Irish for scholarship had become established throughout Europe." Another writer, Ware, tells us, "that, to the universities of Ireland, the Irish and Britons, and at length the Gauls and Saxons, repaired as to marts of good literature." O'Halloran writes, that when a man of letters was missing on the continent, or in Britain, it became a proverb, "*Amandatus est, ad disciplinam in Hibernia.*" Sixty-five years previous to the discovery of Iceland by the Northmen, in the ninth century, Irish emigrants had visited and inhabited that island. About the year 725, Irish ecclesiastics sought seclusion upon the Faroe islands. In the tenth century, voyages between Ireland and Iceland were of ordinary occurrence, *and in the eleventh century, a country west from Ireland and south of that part of the American continent which was discovered by the adventurous Northmen, in the preceding age, was known to them under the name of Albania, Whiteman's Land, or Great Ireland.*

These facts are certain, whether as absolute truths or as recog-

nized traditions. The italicised portions of the above summary were firmly believed among the Northmen and the Irish. The preceding parts belong to the pages of received and unquestionable history. We have foreborne unnecessary details, contenting ourselves with indicating rather than supplying the true sources of speculation and research. These particulars present a reasonable theory, that a settlement of Irish, or of some kindred European tribe, had been made, and had grown into power in the southern portions of the North American continent, extending from the Chesapeake to the Isthmus of Darien, hundreds of years before the era of Spanish discovery. The traditions of the Northmen—the same chronicles which record the discovery of New England by this people, and which are now generally regarded as veracious, affording the same sort of evidence of the fact—the traditions of the Irish—the traditions of the red men of America—numerous affinities of names and dialects, tending to confirm the belief, against which there does not weigh a single human probability. The Irish settlers, like the merchant Northmen, might have been driven by stress of weather from their course, and might have felt compensated in the loss of ships by finding a new and fertile country. If we have proofs of Irish adventure and civilization—bells, books, and crosiers in Iceland in the tenth century, why should not the Carolinas and Georgia have been vouchsafed the symbol of the cross, from the hands of wandering *papas*, at the same period driven by a northeast storm across the vacant waste of the Atlantic? Professor Rafn is of opinion that the Whiteman's Land, or Great Ireland of the Northmen, was the country lying south of the Chesapeake, and extending to East Florida. The Northmen actually had a chart of this asserted region at a very early period. On this chart Albania was pointed out in due juxtaposition, with Vinland (New England), and, as is supposed, with East Florida. If the proofs be strong with regard to the identification of the former region, then does the existence of the latter depend on the same testimony. If we believe that the Northmen discovered New England, we are forced to give all the faith which they require to the chronicles which declare the rest. We have barely glimpsed at the sagas which refer to New England under the Northmen, and have foreborne all proofs as-

suming the general recognition of the truth of their chronicles in this respect. We need scarcely say that numerous proofs are found in support of the traditions of the Northmen, among which the Dighton or Assonet "Writing Rock" near Taunton, Massachusetts, is not the least remarkable. This writing has been deciphered, and is supposed to be a record made by one of the voyagers with Thorfinn Karlsefne. His name, and the number of his associates, have been traced out distinctly among the characters, which are shown to be those of a Runic inscription. Let the reader understand that we forbear numerous passages and instances in proof of the assumptions in the text, satisfied with giving the conclusions of our author, with such of our own conjectures as may possibly bear upon and illustrate them.

Professor Rafn is of opinion that "Whiteman's Land" was a region of very great extent, at least, upon the sea. One remark in passing. When the Northmen speak of the Skrœlings, or Esquimaux, as being the inhabitants of the more northerly regions of the United States, they probably simply conferred upon our Indians the name of a race with which they were most familiar, and which more nearly resembled our aborigines than any other. The distinguishing traits were slight, and not easy to be perceived where there was no frequent or friendly communion. The dark bronze skin, the long black hair, the great eyes, and the high cheek bones, would readily confound the two races in the sight of a very simple and very hurried observer. It is also to be noted that the Northmen speak of Great Ireland in the language of intimacy, and describe it as "west from Ireland, near Vinland the Good"—and again, "next and somewhat behind Vinland."

"From what cause," says Mr. Beamish, "could the name of Great Ireland have arisen, but from the fact of the country having been colonized by Irish?" And the other term, "Whiteman's Land," was inevitably the result of a striking contrast between the inhabitants of this region and the very different race which occupied the rest of the continent. There is nothing improbable in the idea of an Irish ship having been driven by stress of weather, as the ships of the Northmen were subsequently driven, across the Atlantic; glad to find land at last, and that safety which no doubt their shattered vessels could no longer afford. It is as little im-

probable that the Irish, who in the eighth century visited Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and colonized them, should have taken voyages of still more extended consequence. A chance such as we have supposed, driving them across the Atlantic, and discovering these shores, would necessarily, if they ever succeeded in effecting their return, induce them to revisit their discovery, and complete the work of colonization so involuntarily begun. So far from there being any improbability in this, nothing in fact could be more plausible and natural. It should be no stumbling-block in the way to this conclusion, that we find nothing in Irish history relating to this specific discovery. To expect that Ireland should assert her past triumphs and adventures, would seem like an impertinence just now. Her voice is only lifted in the language of complaint, and precious folly it would be in her to claim for her pride, the discoveries of the past in foreign lands, when she is scarcely conscious, and certainly not sure of the possession of her own! But of her colonization she does speak, though in terms quite too general to serve our present argument.

Assuming the fact as established, of a white race, speaking a language like that of the Irish, and occupying the American continent, or portions of it, so early as the year 1005, it does not follow that they came from Ireland. We may owe them to the same famous Phœnician stock from which the Irish themselves are supposed to spring. Their settlement in the western hemisphere may be coeval with that of other branches among the Isles of Britain. With this conjecture, we might pass with more confidence to the examination of Mexican antiquities. It will be remembered that the latter people, on the first coming of the Spaniards, described themselves as but recently the conquerors of the country. The terrors of Montezuma when he heard of Cortes—by which this till then unquailing despot was made to tremble in his towers—were chiefly inspired by the fact that the invaders were a white and bearded people. The traditions of his ancestors, and the prophecies of his priesthood, had assured him that the ancient inhabitants of the country would return, and once more require their possessions. The effect of this tradition upon Montezuma was a subject of humiliation even among his people, by whom the superstition was felt also, though in less degree.

He lost all his courage from the moment the Spaniards began their approach to his empire. His purposes were marked by indecision, and his final resolution to destroy the invaders came too late for his extrication from the toils. Prior to this period he had been the tyrant of the country. Brave to the last degree, he was at once the guardian of his people, and the terror of their foes. But with the presence of the white stranger, his right arm becomes palsied, and he sinks into impotence, despairing and without an effort!

The reference to Montezuma and the Mexicans, necessarily brings to mind the interesting volumes of Mr. Stephens, upon the ruined cities of Central America. This writer argues from his inquiries that the people by whom these remains are left, were indigenous. He denies that they had an Egyptian origin, and even ventures to pronounce them the work of the very people who occupied the country at the invasion of Cortes. The reflections and reasons which lead him to this conclusion do not impress us with their force. Without pretending to say that the people were not indigenous, we cannot subscribe to the opinion that their monuments do not resemble the Egyptian. We find the resemblance in many cases exceedingly striking. Let any one for example, compare the statue at page 349, Vol. II, of Mr. Stephens's work, with familiar specimens from Thebes and Luxor, and he can scarcely fail to be struck with the unquestionably Koptic character of this remarkable image. It has all the Egyptian characters. The stern, but sweet repose—the massive outline—the thick lips—the great union of weight and ease in the attitude—the breadth of nostril—the even oval of the head—the massive head-gear, and that strange and sad aspect of solidity, which looks out from most Egyptian sculptures of the human countenance and form,—all seem to declare similar sources for the inspiration of the differing people. After surveying this, turn to the Torso, at page 139, Vol. I, and you recal at a glance the famous image of the Sphinx. Compare the former with this, as perhaps the most characteristic specimen of the colossal ideal of Egyptian art, and we can scarce persuade ourselves, that, though it comes not from the Egyptian chisel, it claims not a like original with the genius of the Egyptian. But it is not to a speci-

men, here and there, that we need refer to establish this singular resemblance. Most of what is preserved to us of Mexican art, betrays the same general types with that of the people of the Nile. There seem to be the same prevailing tastes, and the same class of models. In most of the specimens of the two people, you remark the frequent union of the cumbrous and the fantastic. The profusion of ornaments, the constant employment of symbolic illustration, the grotesqueness into which an ambition for the colossal is so likely to terminate—these are leading outlines of identity between the genius of the respective races. It does not impair this identity to show that there is a difference in mere details. Every change of country, of climate, natural objects and domestic necessities, must, as a matter of course, affect what is exterior in the national mind—provide it with new subjects of art and illustration—with new materials of thought and recreation,—but scarcely impair the general tone, the character, the manners, and the received impulse, accorded by the original family. The *genius loci* has its requisitions, but these extend only to the moral costume of the emigrant, and not to the religious in his character which constitutes the native elements that bind him to his stock. To show that the Pyramids of the Egyptians were always simple, and contemplated no compound uses, either as burial places or as temples, while such compound uses were characteristic of like works among the people of Central America, will make nothing against the singular and almost conclusive fact that the pyramidal was the favourite form of structure at Uxmal and Palenque. Nations naturally advance, if room for progress be permitted them. To combine the place of sepulture with that of worship—to enshrine the canonized bones of prince or prophet, beneath the altar to which he drew down, by his prayers, the blessings of heaven—might argue for the people who conceived this improvement upon the great waste of burial place among the Egyptians, an advance in civilization; and the genius of the same people, permitted a new life in another hemisphere, might graft a new use upon an old one, and lose nothing of its identity with the past. An old model might well be improved by enlarged uses, yet forfeit nothing of its native character to the advancing people.

Besides, a race that goes abroad must naturally adapt their customs to the differing conditions of their new abode; and it is in its readiness to obey this necessity that a nation most certainly declares its genius. Even if we found nothing of the pyramid in Central America, such a deficiency could not be construed, in the teeth of such other evidence as we do find, into a proof that the people of the latter country were wholly unaware of the works of art in the great valley of the Nile. To reason in this way, from a negation, is wholly illogical; but here the negation itself is not made out, for, though it be shown that no perfect pyramid has yet been found in Palenque or Copan, yet there is no fact more remarkable than the one that all their works are, to a certain point, pyramidal. It is yet to be shown that these pyramids were at no time perfect. They may have been surmounted with wooden caps or spires. The lapse of years—the assaults of enemies and time—may have wrought together to impair fabrics which, made of the "soft grit-stone" of the country, are not likely to withstand for ever the destructive consequences of neglect and storm. But even these suggestions are not needed to the argument. The separate uses of the two structures might occasion all the difference. The structures of the Egyptian were burial places; those of the Mexican were temples. The divinities of the one may have been reptiles from the Nile, while fire or the sun may have been, and probably was, the object of worship with the other. The one needed a pool for his deity, the other a mountain. Yet, thus different in their religious rites, the genius of art in the two people, both coming from the East, would leave similar monuments behind them—designs borrowed from the same sources, and fancies declarative of like general tastes and sympathies.

In contending for the strong general resemblance existing between the remains in Central America and those of Egypt, we are not to be understood as assuming the former works to be those of an Egyptian family. On the contrary, there are several reasons for thinking they are not. One of our objections to the former assumption consists in the very great variety of the human face, which the drawings present to us, taken from the same monuments. The dissimilarity is very remarkable. Look at the head, for example, at p. 136, Vol. I. This, supposed to be a por-

trait, is decidedly that of a white man. It will compare neither with the Koptic nor with the Indian head, either of North or South America. It resembles none of the tawny tribes of our continent. The character of the separate features, with the *tout ensemble*, is completely Caucasian. Note the difference between the two lower heads, also in alto-relievo, on the column at p. 140. Contrast these with the *bas-reliefs* at p. 142. Compare these again with the colossal head at p. 143 ; a head which, however exaggerated as an object of terror, is strikingly Anglo-Saxon. Remark, also, the high-relief at p. 150 ; and note not only the cumbrous ornament but the massive drapery, which was not a characteristic of the costume of the red men, either before or since the Spanish conquest. Compare, also, with the Indian heads in general, the grand colossal fragment at p. 151. Look also at the head, p. 152 ; and, though evidently distorted for the purpose of exciting terror, you can scarcely doubt that it was designed to represent that of a white, and an European. Such, also, is that at p. 133, which, in addition to the identity drawn from general outlines, possessed another marked peculiarity, clearly anything but Indian, in its moustaches and beard. The crowned head at p. 166 is a very fair specimen of the ordinary Caucasian head. Contrast the three heads on the column facing p. 158, and note the radical difference of character between them. Note, also, plate 3, p. 158, the remarkable dissimilarity in the two profiles, the decisive European superiority of the upper head, and the equally decided African character of the larger one below. Note the wonderful difference and the wonderful effects in the expression, caused by this difference, between the prominence of forehead, nose, and chin in the upper, and the mean depression of the same features in the lower face.

In Vol. II., examine the frontispiece, and compare the faces of the erect figures with those of the crouching persons upon whose shoulders they stand. Contrast the smooth, mean, unintelligent features of the former, with the bold protrusion of chin and forehead—the chin being bearded—in the latter. This picture tells a story. It is the picture of a triumph. The brutal conqueror bestrides the prostrate form of him whom he has overthrown. The centre face is that of the god of war, to whom homage is

offered, and probably a sacrifice promised. It is a face that symbols the sun. The tongue lolling out, betrays the supposed thirst of the war god—the Moloch of the Mexican—for his draught of blood. The worship of the people of Palenque was evidently a bloody ritual, and their modes of sacrifice remind us of the Phœnicians, whose gods were made hollow, that they might receive their living victims. The presentation of children to this idol, as shown in this plate, and a similar tender to a huge bird, at p. 345, reminds us of other rites practised among the Phœnicians. The Carthaginians employed an eagle, as an emblem of the sun, in token of its annual renewal of its vigour. The conjecture is not unreasonable, which finds a likeness between the Egyptian Phœnix and that strange bird by which the altar here is surmounted. But to return to the tablet which appears as the frontispiece to this volume. Mr. Stephens thus describes it: "The principal personages will be recognized at once as the same who are represented in the tablets of the cross (p. 345). They wear the same dress, but here seem to be making offerings. Both personages stand on the backs of human beings, one of whom supports himself by his hands and knees, and the other seems crushed to the ground by the weight. Between them, at the foot of the tables, are two figures sitting cross-legged; one bracing himself with his right hand on the ground, and with the left supporting a square table; the action and attitude of the other are the same, except that they are in reverse order. The table also rests upon their bended necks, and their disturbed countenances may perhaps be considered expressions of pain and suffering. They are both clothed in leopard skins. Upon this table rests two batons crossed, their upper extremities richly ornamented, and supporting what seems a hideous mask, the eyes widely expanded, and the tongue hanging out."

This surely implies a story of war and conquest; and we have only to compare the features of those who are erect, and of those who crouch beneath them, to see that the war has been carried on between two utterly distinct races of people. All the characteristics of face and feature are essentially marked and in opposition.

Contrast, at page 353, the two plates, 1 and 2, representing, it

would seem—though now they appear equally erect—two of the persons noted in the frontispiece, one of whom before was crouching, while the other stood upon his back. Note, again, their very dissimilar features, and the no less distinct character of their several garments, their ornaments and implements. The conclusion is scarcely to be avoided, that they represent very different and contending races. Let these samples of contrast and comparison suffice. Something, we think, is to be learned by studying the conflict in these monuments. Enough has been said to show, that there is an individuality in the heads, which we owe to this unknown chisel of Palenque, which will enable us to separate them into classes. This leads us to conclude, that they were travellers as well as warriors—that they were familiar with the people of different countries—were in all probability of Carthaginian race—a people with whom the planting of distinct colonies was a part of the commercial policy—who are known to have sent forth immense colonies beyond the Pillars of Hercules—who made large settlements in Spain, procured tin and amber from the coasts of Great Britain, and are likely to have left their seed in Ireland.

It is, we should say, almost conclusive against the conjecture of Mr. Stephens—that the people who occupied the country at the time of the Spanish conquest, were the sculptors and temple builders at Copan and Palenque,—that the Spaniards found no proofs of a genius equal to such arts existing among them at their arrival. What is quoted from Herrera and Castillo does not make out a case. To show that they could paint and whitewash and make rude images of stucco, proves little or nothing; and the mere mention of stone buildings, of large courts, flights of steps, and naked images, is too vague and inconclusive. It does not suggest anything of the noble sculpture, the vast architecture, and the singularly elaborate performances of art, such as is here described, upon which, had they discovered them, the Spaniards—who were familiar with the wonders of Moorish art, after the conquest of Boabdil—would have never wearied to dilate. Besides, Herrera himself expresses his surprise, in the very passage which Mr. Stephens quotes, that such works should be achieved by a people "*having no use of any metal,*"—showing clearly that

he could not have seen them engaged in such works, or the *modus operandi*, without metal, would have ceased to be an occasion of surprise and inquiry. From Castillo, we learn that their "*idols were of clay*," with "*diabolical* countenances, and that they had *figures of serpents* and of idols *painted* on the walls." Now, would these be the terms employed by the most ordinary writer to describe such works of vastness, finish and splendour as come to us in these illustrated volumes of Mr. Stephens. We are indebted to Mr. Poinsett for a very liberal collection of such grim idols of clay, with diabolical countenances, as were produced by the art of the Mexican inhabitants. To show, as Mr. Stephens does, from various Spanish authorities, that the natives had numerous temples, with long flights of steps, and that they were expert in plastering and whitewashing—that they had courts and towers and piazzas—could paint and were otherwise advanced in a certain degree of civilization, fails to sustain the view which he takes of this subject. While we very well know that the Mexicans were not a savage people; that they had attained a high degree of social improvement, in comparison with the contiguous nations, there is yet nothing to induce the conviction that these trophies of art were within the powers of their national genius. No such style of building, so far as we are advised, prevailed in Mexico, Cholula, or any of the great cities of that time. Nay, is it not very certain, that these places, occupied by the ruins of Copan, Palenque, &c., were not then known as places, or places of any importance.

The records of the Spaniards were usually equally copious and minute. They sent to Spain numerous specimens of all the wonders and curiosities which they could lay hands on. Besides, they were always disposed to exaggerate rather than to lessen, the marvels of their own conquest. Fancy, in what terms of hyperbole, their accounts of these wonders, had they seen them, would have been written. Be sure, it would not have been left to the modern antiquarian, by picking out a meagre half sentence, here and there, from the writings of fierce and ignorant soldiers, to assert this more than doubtful claim. Is it to be supposed, also, that these wonderful cities, once discovered, would ever have been allowed to sleep again? Nay, is it not sufficiently obvious,

that these buried cities were buried long before the time of Cortes, and that they never would have been suffered to remain buried, had not the nations been subverted and utterly gone by whom they had been raised? Is it likely that Spain, once in possession, and the country resigned to her sway, would have left these chosen spots to become swallowed up in the accumulating dust of centuries—covered with mountains of earth, and clothed with the forest growth of ages, if they had ever been known to any of the conquerors? Would she have willingly permitted to perish, the proofs of a genius in art, so very superior to her own? It is not a reasonable supposition. Several things must be established before it can be shown that the temple builders of Copan and Palenque, and the people of Mexico, at the period of the Spanish conquest, were the same.

It must be shown that the style of their buildings, public buildings being understood, was the same. It must be shown that their characters, hieroglyphics and pictures were the same—the costume and weapons the same; and it must be shown that the Mexican had in possession the very remarkable abilities for sculpture which these remains denote. But if it be shown, as, we apprehend, can easily be done, that the temples of Mexico, Cholula, Tlascala, etc., were of very different character; that their statuary consisted of rude images formed of potter's clay, grotesque and foul; that the people wore a very different costume; that they had not the same style of face with the specimens given in these volumes of Mr. Stephens, and that they themselves knew nothing of these buried cities, or if they did, that they occupied them simply as the inheritors of a race whom their ancestors had expelled—then the question must be set at rest forever. Other questions of comparison occur, but we need not offer them here. Enough to express our belief, that if they held in possession any of the arts by which these great national remains were wrought, they held them as inheritors by conquest, and that, in their hands, their possessions survived the genius by which they were wrought.

Having suggested the several clues of study to the reader curious in our antiquities, we leave him to prosecute the inquiry. Whether he will reach any safe conclusion upon which the sober historian will be content to rest, it will not trouble us to deter-

mine. It is enough for our present speculations that the glimpses of fact which we array are of themselves a world to the resources of the American romancer. He will find here an ample field for bold adventure, and imaginative daring. In the adventures of Bjorn Asbraudson, the hero of Breidavik, the national poet may one day find the substance of a dwarf epic, quite as happy as any of the border tales of Scott. The stern and savage nobleness of such a character, dashed with good-humoured generosity, will admit of many glowing details, such as make the narratives of the Scalds so gratefully picturesque, amidst all their freezing severity. From the very volume before us—a bald abridgment—fifty spirited ballads might be manufactured with ease; and a judicious artist might make a most romantic tale of the colony of Green Erin upon the shores of Carolina and Georgia; showing how, driven by stress of weather, and finding so lovely a land, greener than their own beloved island, the wandering Irishmen pitched their tents for good; how they built cities; how they flourished amid songs and dances—with now and then a faction-fight by way of reminiscence; how, suddenly, the fierce red men of the southwest came down upon them in howling thousands, captured their women, slaughtered their men, and drove them to their fortresses; how they fought to the last, and perished to a man! And, in this history, you have the history of the tumuli—the works of defence and worship—the thousand proofs, with which our land is covered, of a genius and an industry immeasurably superior to anything that the Indian inhabitants of this country were ever supposed to have attempted or possessed.

ARTICLE III.

THE CASE OF MAJOR ANDRE.

The political and military intrigue between Benedict Arnold, of the American, and John André, of the British army, which formed so striking an event in the annals of the Revolution, and which, in previous pages,* has been considered with reference to its employment for the purposes of fiction, has been more recently forced again upon our consideration, by a paper in one of our periodicals.† This paper discusses, at the same time, the claims of André upon our sympathy, and those of Miss Seward, as his eulogist, upon our respect and admiration. To the former, the writer,—chiming in with what has been very commonly the sentiment in our country—gives much more respect and honour than we are prepared to accord;—to the latter, much less than we are disposed to think that she deserves. His language, indeed, in relation to Miss Seward, appears to us equally and unnecessarily harsh and unjust. He denies her merits equally as an author and a woman. The motive for this severity will scarcely justify it. It is found in the Monody, now but little known, but of great success and currency in the day of its freshness—which issued from the pen of this lady, on the execution of her friend and favourite. The portion of this performance which so particularly offends, is that in which she speaks of the conduct and character of Washington. Now, we humbly believe that no one holds in higher esteem than ourselves, the name and fame of our national hero; and we shall always be prepared, with our feeble powers, whenever the task shall be necessary, to assert and defend his

* See Part I. pp. 41—58 of these "Views."

† The Southern Literary Messenger, in an interesting and well written article, by Mr. J. C. Pickett, *charge des affaires* of the United States, at the capital of Peru,—read originally before the members of the National Institute.

claims as one of the noblest spirits of modern civilization. Of such a necessity the probabilities now are exceeding small, and it really seems quite too late in the day to be angry, because Anna Seward has been pleased to launch her truly feminine shaft at that broad and heroic bosom. The ages and the nations have equally determined upon her claims as a poet, and those of Washington as a christian and a chief. The case, not misjudged greatly by contemporaries, has been settled finally by posterity and time. We have no reason, on behalf of Washington, to regret or to disturb this judgment. To reconsider it now, in connection with the offence, real or seeming, of Miss Seward, is rather with the charitable motive of suggesting an adequate excuse for her; and this, we take it, may readily be found in the peculiar circumstances which are coupled with the case.

Anna Seward, who lived to be an old woman, was, at the period of our revolution, a tolerably young one. She was distinguished by her talent, and by no means wanting in personal beauty. John André, was, at eighteen, a young tradesman, living in the same neighbourhood with herself. Kindred in their talents, with like tastes and sympathies, they were soon brought together in the same circles of society. An intimacy grew up between them, and they shared their secrets with one another. They both wrote verses; he, with perhaps little more skill than marks ordinarily those of the well educated gentleman about town, and she with a genuine talent, something above mediocrity, which, at a period of greater critical severity, and with the advantage of better models than this lady ever had the fortune to possess, would probably have greatly increased her claims to future attention. The intimacy between André and herself, might have ripened into a closer tie and interest, but that he already loved another; and Anna, the friend of the lady who was the object of his passion, became his confidante, and, we have reason to suppose, was hers also. His love did not run smoothly. He loved unwisely and too well; and the rejection of his suit, by the lady of his love, drove the rash young man to volunteer in the British army intended for America. This step seems to have been unwarranted equally by his training and his tastes. We have no proofs of his having any predilection for a military life;

no proofs that he was endowed with any of the peculiar and the necessary requisites for acquiring distinction or a lead in arms. On the contrary, he does not seem to have shown himself possessed of any military accomplishments. We hear not that he was skilful at his weapon, bold and gallant as a horseman, or that, at any time, he distinguished himself in actual combat. By this, however, we are not to be supposed to imply that he was at all destitute of that courage which every gentleman is supposed to possess,—a courage to go forward, when the path of duty is clear before him, and the voices of one's comrades require that one should forget and throw aside the natural reluctance at strife, in the necessity of conquest. But that he had no decided military *penchant*, we take to be quite obvious from all the circumstances in his career. His chief claims upon our attention, seem to have been due to the graces of a fine person, a good temper, a gentle bearing, a quick and lively intellect, and a knack at making verses and pencil sketches, which betrayed equal cleverness and taste. He had a talent for good-humoured satire, which was more mischievous than malicious, and refreshed his brother soldiers with frequent doggerel at the expense of the awkward training and queer and tattered equipments of the American militia. A good table companion, a clever scribe, there may yet have been other influences bearing in his favour—possibly of friends and family at home—by which he succeeded in entering the military family of Sir Henry Clinton. He seems to have been a sort of private secretary rather than the military *aide* of Sir Henry, and we may be permitted to doubt, indeed, whether there were any other aids of the British commander, to whom he would have proposed the peculiar service upon which he sent André, and by which the latter lost his life. On this delicate question we are wanting in some certain lights. We are not aware that military etiquette, or the laws of military honour, require obedience to commands which, in addition to the probable loss of life, involve, with this risk, the farther one of ignominy and a felon's punishment. A commander may require his subordinate to lead the forlorn hope, and to jeopard life, and every thing but honour. The business of the spy, odious in all situations, is particularly ungracious in the eyes of military

men. Is it not purely optional with them whether it be undertaken or not,—and will it be undertaken by any soldier, governed by nice sensibilities and a due regard to the opinions of society, unless the service be necessary to some last and imperative necessity. Such a necessity does not seem to have been apparent in the case of André. The British army was unassailed, in no danger, and no other end was proposed than the possible promotion of that cause for which he had assumed his sword and uniform. These are the proofs of his employment and his honour. Shall he put them off at the mere will of his captain? Can any captain require that these badges of an honourable service, should be thrown aside or hidden by disguise. We do not know that history has ever condescended to ask this question, and yet, upon its solution, much of the claims to sympathy, of John André, will depend. We shall resume this part of our subject hereafter.

Severe and totally unmerited as was the censure upon Washington, in the monody of Miss Seward upon her favourite, the sweet and gentle intimacy which had endeared them to one another renders such the natural expression of her feelings at his stern and startling fate. The terrible and unexpected doom which he underwent, whether merited or not, would naturally overwhelm her heart with horror—with the keenest sense of personal privation—with the deepest resentment against those through whose agency he perished. The affair, at the time, as we gather from numerous contemporaneous sources, was one of a fierce and singular excitement—such as, even now, when we are comparatively cool in both countries, we feel it would not be difficult to comprehend. Something of the British feeling at large, and that of Miss Seward in particular, may be conceived by that sentiment of indignation which is still expressed by ourselves when the wanton execution of Hayne of South Carolina, and Hale of Connecticut, is the subject of reflection or remark. The monody of Miss Seward on Major André, written at the moment when the first keen, terrible surprise and pang were felt, naturally declared an exaggerated feeling of horror at the event, and hostility against those by whom it was occasioned. This sentiment was not that of Miss Seward only; it was that of the British nation. That portion of it which

relates to the unbending decision of Washington and his alleged cruelties, embodied the passionate language of the British heart in the first moment of its anger and surprise. The poet drew her facts from the ordinary newspapers, impelled to the fullest faith in their details by the deep and tender personal interest which she felt in the victim. She gave a voice to the popular feeling when she expressed her own. Society in England declared the same sentiments, the same rage, regret, and indignation—all visited, perhaps, on the same head, in very similar language. The event was a startling one, at a peculiar crisis in the war, when the case was growing hopeless, and both nations were weary of the struggle. Besides, the affair was not without its technical difficulties; and the course taken by the American authorities did not wholly escape censure even among ourselves. How far André could be made liable for the treachery of Arnold, having the regular pass of that general, was a question even with the domestic casuists—a question scarcely to be suggested by good sense, when it holds the technicality at variance with the substantial interest which it was intended to promote. No one now-a-days has any doubt that the passport can never be made to shelter the treachery which seeks to subvert and to destroy the very power from which it issues. But this is not our subject of discussion.

The keen sympathy of Miss Seward in behalf of André seems to have had its justification from various quarters. The popular tradition that Washington himself wept at the necessity of signing the death-warrant of his victim, has never, to this day, undergone dispute; though it would be difficult, we suspect, to point to any certain authority by which the fact is shown; and yet, even though it were not strictly true—if that calm and superior soul did not acknowledge any more pain at this than he would have done in any other case of duty or necessity—the tradition must at least be held to indicate the popular notion of what was due to the victim, of honourable and peculiar sympathy. The *prestige* of great talent—a reputation exaggerated very much beyond its real claims—a graceful bearing, and gentlemanly tastes, won for André, and still secures an extraordinary sympathy for his memory, even in our country. In all probability much more lively and strong in our country than his own. That he was a man of more than

clever parts, it is not now easy to believe. We ask vainly for any proof of great superiority. In that day, to write tolerable verses was to achieve a reputation. It was the day of commonplace. Such was the history in England; and the Hayleys, the Darwins, the Sewards, and the Merrys, who made the British Parnassus when "George the Third was king," suffice to show how modest were the exactions of the critic in that era of metrical mediocrity and whip-syllabub. Such verses as André wrote are now written by thousands who die and make no sign. Perhaps, but for his untimely and conspicuous fate, they would not have been regarded then, unless by his sweetheart and his comrades of the mess. But the doom which elevated him to superior ignominy, elevated, in the eyes of the sympathizing, his peculiar virtues—brought up, in an exaggerated total, the sum of his pretensions, upon which, under such circumstances, his friends would be more apt than ever to insist. Besides, he was the only victim. Had Arnold perished at the same time, and by a like fate, the sympathy for André would probably have lost much of its vitality and depth.

Governed somewhat too much by our present estimate of Miss Seward's claims as an author, the writer in the periodical referred to, whose article has provoked us to this, expresses considerable chagrin at an anecdote which is told by Southey, of the great solicitude felt by Washington to impress that lady with a sense of her injustice to himself. To attain this object, we are told that he communicated to her all the official documents, or copies of them, which related to this transaction, and by which his own course was fully justified. "These papers," says Miss Seward, "filled me with contrition for the rash injustice of my censure." We have no means of arriving at the truth of her statement, but see no reason to question its correctness. She may probably have made much more of the matter than Washington did, or intended,—moved by a very natural sentiment of vanity, at the special concession to her genius, thus offered by one whom the age had already begun to regard as the hero of its civilization. Our critic, however, entertains his doubts of the whole proceeding. He does not seem willing to think, that a great statesman could thus let himself down, by such a degree of consideration,

shown to a simple poet. He regards the step (as alleged,) taken by Washington in this connection, as an unfortunate condescension, and freely expresses his regret that he should stoop to any effort at his own justification. We frankly confess ourselves unable to share in these regrets. We regard this proceeding of Washington, if true—and we think it highly probable—to have been equally honourable to his heart and understanding—to a right-minded sense of justice, and to a humility which equally honours his temper and sagacity. No man is so great as to be above the respect of his age. No man, truly wise and worthy, will hesitate at placing his actions in a proper light, before those who have been mistaken in them. If he does so, he provokes a natural doubt of the veracity of his own claims to eminence, and risks the forfeiture of that fair renown which only attends his footsteps who never feels himself wholly free from the lowest as well as the loftiest responsibility; and who, while laying his secret bosom open before God, is not too proud to suffer the humblest creature to behold the revelation at the same moment. For our own part, we are free to see in this proceeding of Washington—always assuming it to have taken place—only an additional proof of the strength and virtue of his character, his modesty and manliness, and that amiable regard to the claims of others, which he never lost sight of in the hour of his greatest prosperity. We see nothing weak, as we see nothing wrong, in that anxiety, at once so human and so characteristic of a becoming ambition, which seeks to be justly appreciated by all classes of persons. It was with Washington a solicitude, such as Shakspeare counsels, and which the truly good man, superior to station, in his proper sense of man and humanity, will ever entertain—to "win golden opinions from all sorts of people,"—not by improper or undue sacrifices of self-respect or dignity, but by a frank honesty, which asks no shield from circumstance—no shelter from position—and is ready at any moment to declare the truth, as much, perhaps, because it bears this attribute, as because of any individual interest which he himself may have in its utterance. It is the small great man, the common-place, every day hero of the market-place, who, perched on his temporary eminence, declares himself totally oblivious or indifferent to all that is said or thought of him by the common

herds that pass below. Washington's heroism was of another complexion. The descriptive lines of Anacreon Moore, meant to be at once moderate and severe—moderate in deference to the fast-growing and favourable opinions of continental Europe, and severe in accordance with those of baffled Britain, whose official representative the Irish patriot just then happened to be—contain, perhaps, as high a tribute to the real worth of our hero as was to be expected from an enemy, and may very well be employed in this place to anticipate the verses of Miss Seward upon the same subject.

> "How shall we rank thee upon glory's page,
> Thou more than soldier, and just less than sage;
> Too formed for peace to act a conqueror's part,
> Too trained in camps to learn a statesman's art;
> Nature designed thee for a hero's mould,
> But ere she cast thee let the stuff grow cold!
> While warmer souls command, nay make their fate,
> *Thy fate made thee and forced thee to be great;*—
> Yet fortune who so oft, so blindly sheds,
> Her brightest halo round the weakest heads,
> Found *thee* undazzled, tranquil as before,
> *Proud to be useful, scorning to be more—*
> *Less prompt at glory's than at duty's claim,*
> Renown the meed but self-applause the aim;
> *All thou hast been reflects less fame on thee,*
> *Far less than all thou hast forborne to be.*"

A description of manifest contradictions, the result of a warfare between the promptings of real conviction and a wilfully hostile mood—a condition of mind not to be reconciled, and only to be repented of. Mr. Moore is, by this time, better prepared than he was then—a youth, and the employée of the British government—to do justice to a great and perfect character. He could not then conceive of the greatness which was simply content to execute its mission. The italicised lines are truthful; the rest, which embody the sneers at our hero's lack of that temper which has but too frequently marked the ordinary worldling hero, may be taken to prove the inferior definitions of heroism with which the writer's mind was troubled. The age is beginning to comprehend the sort of greatness upon which our youthful poet would insist, and to have done with all that vulgar sort of heroism

which mocks and despises humanity. How much the deportment of Washington himself may have contributed to this enlightenment, which seems to take date from his day, is a matter for the philosopher. For him to have shown himself insensible to contemporaneous reputation—where it was not fame that he sought, but honourable justification only—would be almost to show himself insensible to the provocations which lead to honourable achievement. He was not thus insensible. He was by no means superior to an anxious hope that his memory might stand, pure and high, in the regards and estimation of all persons; and it is, we confess, a something additionally gratifying to believe that the solicitude of the Father of his Country, was duly increased in this respect, when the person to be persuaded of the purity and the propriety of his conduct, was a woman and a poet—both legitimate dispensers of the golden crown of reputation. He writes to no other of his maligners. He offers proofs to no one of the male assailants and slanderers, of whom the British press and British society might have then furnished its thousands. But, great as he is, conscious and confident as he feels himself, he yet acknowledges a claim on the part of the poet to have the truth set clear before his eyes. The awards of time, at least, if not of immortality, depend somewhat upon it; and Washington is not indifferent to the censure and the judgment of his race. It does not matter whether Miss Seward is a great poet, or one of very moderate abilities. This does not affect the relation between them. He may have thought her a great poet, and her rank, at that time, in Europe, somewhat justified that opinion; particularly when she was beheld through the magnifying medium of distance, and by the half-penny light of the provincial candle. The truth is, there *was* a strength and an energy in her verses, where Washington himself was the subject, which might well compel his consideration, and excite his apprehensions. Accused thus loudly, with so much earnestness, in such language, and by one pure and talented, and, by reason of her sex and circumstances, apart from the selfish and prejudiced impulse of the crowd, he might well start, and re-examine his cause, and entertain moments of misgiving whether he had not been led aside from the course of right—however against his wish—by some of those erring influ-

ences which are found, upon occasion, to work for evil upon the noblest and the purest natures. The voice of a mourner, crying in melodious language from the bereaved home in Litchfield, might well occasion emotions in his breast, which the armies of Europe, her crowned heads and mighty statesmen, would vainly labour to awaken.

But, to the claims of Miss Seward as a poet. She *was* a poet, though brought up in a wretched school, and destined to suffer in her real pretensions, because of her unhappy training. Though greatly overrated in her own day, as well as her friend Darwin —of whom, by the way, our critic entertains a far too favourable judgment—she is yet entitled to our respect for frequent performances of real and considerable beauty. Our critic places her far below Darwin. In our humble notion her natural endowments would place her much above the poet of the Botanic Garden. She was less of the artist, it is true, but she had much more of the divine afflatus than that stiff and stately architect of chemical delights. The tender and passionate portions of this very monody on André, are in proof of this. Let her but dismiss her affectations,—which were those of her school and period,—and she is equally true and interesting. And let none of those,—if any there be,—who still take delight in the cold and mechanical conceits of Darwin, and his monotonous and wearisome sing-song, leap too suddenly to the conclusion that we are doing great wrong to a once favourite and still much deserving writer. That the genius of Anna Seward was not inferior to his own—at least in his opinion—one fact may suffice to show. The first fifty verses in the "Botanic Garden" are wholly from the pen of the latter,—written by her in compliment to Darwin, and incorporated by him into his poem, forming, in fact, its introduction, without any sort of acknowledgment. This fact, according to Sir Walter Scott, is beyond question or denial. "It is proved," he tells us, "by the publication of the verses, with her name, in some periodical publication, previous to the appearance of Dr. Darwin's poem. And the disingenuous suppression of the aid of which he availed himself, must remain a considerable stain upon the character of the poet of Flora." Let the reader compare for himself the appropriated verses, thus designated, with those which are certainly

Darwin's, and he will see that the fair author who has furnished his introduction, and possibly suggested his theme, had no reason to be ashamed of her contributions to his muse. The style is that of her "monody," though portions of the latter are infinitely superior in all the substantial merits of poetry. Upon that production, indeed, her poetical reputation may be suffered to rest. Written under very great excitement, under the impulse of feelings, personal and national, of the intensest order, this production possesses numerous lines of great force and beauty, and, with some lackadaisacal interruptions, flows on in a strain of vehement verse, which, had it been much more frequent in the writings of this lady, would not have made it necessary that we should now be discussing her claims to our consideration, and would have done more than we possibly can do, in justification of the solicitude which was felt by Washington. This vehemence sometimes rises into a real poetic fury, which needed nothing but training, habitual chasteness of style, proper models and a right direction, to have given its author a place in near neighbourhood to the symmetrical and courtly poet of Heloisa. A severer exercise would have enabled Miss Seward to fling off heroic melodies which would have done no dishonour to the admirable grace and polish of Pope. We are not sure that her genius was very much inferior. Of course, we are to remember her inferior advantages—the difficulties in the way of her sex—her provincial standards and associations, and the thousand deteriorating influences, which, in the case of a woman, contribute to baffle the aims and to impair the energies of the intellectual nature. But why not a specimen of this "monody," which, we take it, is not over-well known to the American reader? There have been several American editions, but they have long since been out of print. The work from which we take our extracts, is that "authentic narrative" of no less a person than Joshua Hett Smith, king's attorney of New York, whose supposed participation in the treachery of Arnold, had nearly secured for him a fate like that of André. His own book, meant to establish his innocence, almost persuades us of his guilt. But, with his case, we have nothing now to do. He seems to have been a feeble creature, if not a treacherous one; and his own printed defence of his conduct, lacking as it

does, equally in ingenuousness and ingenuity, leaves us to the conviction that, if really innocent, his book does great mischief to his character.

The "Monody on André," is given at length among the appendices of Smith's volume. It is introduced by a dedication to Sir Henry Clinton, which is followed by some flat verses of William Hayley, author of the "Triumphs of Temper," a didactic, the leaden slumber of which it is not possible for any admiration now to disturb. The monody contains about five hundred lines, and gives the chief events in his life and fortunes. The author, in a note, informs us, that, in but one passage only—that which relates to his being taken prisoner at the beginning of the war, and in which she describes him as impetuously leading to the assault—has she dealt in fiction. Of that affair she confesses that she knows nothing. The poem is followed by certain private letters of André to herself, which she publishes in proof of his wit and vivacity. These letters are simply pleasing—the unconstrained ebullitions of a young man of some reading, good taste and amiable disposition. They possess no peculiar merits, indicate nothing marked in character, and declare no great resources whether of thought or fancy. They are just such epistles as might flow from the hands of any clever youth, who had learned to express himself with good taste and confidence.

The poem of Miss Seward opens badly, in that rotund and swelling style—so false and flatulent—so totally untrue to good taste and just poetic simplicity, which prevailed in the stilt periods of the Pyes and Darwins, the Cottles and Della Cruscas —a period in modern English literature quite as vicious and much less worthy, than that of Lyly and his *Euphues*. The progress of the verse, though flowing and musical, is marked by constant transitions of idea which confuse and weary the reader, and which neither inform nor excite him. That coherent, consecutive strain of song, which is alone durable, by which a just and leading idea, a bold and original conception, is happily carried out by complete and mutually depending links of thought, till the whole chain of reasoning is made conclusively apparent, is not to be looked for here ;—and the defect is not one of endowment, but of training and education. But we propose not to criticise

this fabric. Our purpose is more simple—only to take from it the passages which concern our country and our hero. We do this without reluctance, as we have no fear that any British invective can hurt the fame of Washington. The embassage of André to Arnold, and the felon contract which they made together, are thus described by our poet:

"As fair Euryalus, to meet his fate,
With Nysus rushes from the Dardan gate—
Relentless Fate! whose fury scorns to spare
The snowy breast, red lip and shining hair—
So polish'd André launches on the waves,
Where Hudson's tide its dreary confines laves;
With firm, intrepid foot the youth explores
Each dangerous pathway of the hostile shores;
But on no veteran-chief his step attends,
As silent round the gloomy wood he wends;
Alone he meets the brave, repentant foe,
Sustains his late resolve, receives his vow,
With ardent skill directs the doubtful course,
Seals the firm bond and ratifies its force."

It was the *rôle* of Arnold to appear the penitent subject, as stated in the last four lines of the preceding passage; and the poet, simple creature! believed all, on this subject, that she read in the newspapers. She proceeds:

"'Tis thus, America, thy generals fly,
And wave new banners in their native sky!
Sick of the mischiefs artful Gallia pours
In friendly semblance on thy ravaged shores.
Unnatural compact!—shall a race of slaves,
Sustain the ponderous standard freedom waves?
No! while their feign'd protection spreads the toils,
The vultures hover o'er your destined spoils.
How fade provincial glories, while ye run,
To court far deeper bondage than ye shun,
* * * * * *
Long did my soul the wretched strife survey,
And wept the horrors of the deathful day;
Through rolling years saw indecisive war,
Drag bleeding wisdom at his iron car;
Exhaust my country's treasure, pour her gore,
In fruitless conflict on the distant shore;
Saw the firm Congress all her might oppose,
And, while I mourn'd her fate, rever'd her foes."

These are not bad lines. Less artful, less metaphorical, than those of Darwin, they are in better taste, more true to nature and to the subject. Besides, we see that the poet is not unprepared to do justice to the strength and character of her country's enemies. In another place she speaks of the error of the British.

"The generous flame,
That boasted Liberty's immortal name,
Blaz'd for its rights infringed, its trophies torn,
And taught the wise the dire mistake to mourn.
When haughty Britain, in a luckless hour,
With rage inebriate, and the lust of power,
To fruitless conquest, and to countless graves,
Led her gay legions o'er the western waves,—
The fiend of discord, cow'ring at the prow,
Sat, darkly smiling at the impending wo!

These lines are less monotonous in their structure than those of Darwin. They are roughened with more skill for the purposes of symmetry and strength. But, the apostrophe to Washington is in a finer and loftier strain.

"Oh, Washington! I thought thee great and good,
Nor knew thy Nero-thirst for guiltless blood;
Severe to use the pow'r that fortune gave,
Thou cool, determin'd murderer of the brave!
Lost to each fairer virtue that inspires
The genuine fervor of the patriot's fires!
And *you*, the base abettors of the doom,
That sunk his blooming honours to the tomb,
Th' opprobrious tomb your hardened hearts decreed,
While all he ask'd was as the brave to bleed.
No other boon the glorious youth implor'd,
Save the cold mercy of the warrior's sword!
Oh! dark and pitiless! Your impious hate
O'erwhelm'd the hero in the ruffian's fate;
Stopp'd with the felon cord the rosy breath,
And venom'd with disgrace the darts of death!
* * * * *
Remorseless Washington! the day shall come,
Of deep repentance for this barbarous doom,
When injur'd André's memory shall inspire
A kindling army with resistless fire;
Each falchion sharpen that the Britons wield,
And lead their fiercest lion to the field!

Then when each hope of thine shall set in night,
When dubious dread and unavailing flight,
Impel your host,—your guilt-upbraided soul,
Shall wish untouch'd the sacred life you stole.
And when thy heart appall'd, and vanquished pride,
Shall vainly ask the mercy they denied,
With horror shalt thou meet the fate they gave,
Nor pity gild the darkness of thy grave;
For Infamy, with livid hand, shall shed
Eternal mildew on thy ruthless head."

These are among the best because the most earnest passages—containing fewest affectations, and appearing, as probably they were, the outpourings of a soul full of grief and indignation. It is not so certain that their spirit and character are quite sustained by the passage which immediately follows, two of the lines of which appear to have been particularly annoying to our American critic.

"Less cruel far than thou, on Illium's plain
Achilles, raging for Patroclus slain!
When hapless Priam bends the aged knee
To deprecate the victor's dire decree;
The nobler Greek, in melting pity spares
The lifeless Hector to his father's prayers;
Fierce as *he* was;—'tis cowards only know,
Persisting vengeance o'er the fallen foe."

Portions of this imprecation somewhat, though feebly, remind us of the final and terrible passage in the "Sketch" of Lord Byron, beginning—

"Oh! wretch without a tear," etc.,

and half persuade us to think that his lordship had these lines in his memory when he penned his own. They are not feminine verses. Disfigured, here and there, by defects of taste and manner, they denote a large degree of natural vigour in the genius, and prompt us to regret the worthless school by which its strength was dissipated in unprofitable efforts, and in a false direction. Scott, speaking of this poem, justly remarks, that it conveys a high impression of the original powers of the author.

The writings of Miss Seward are voluminous. Of these, it is our fortune to possess copies only of her "Monody" and of her

"Beauties,"—a volume which now lies before us, published in London, in 1813, and edited by W. C. Oulton. This volume is made up of varieties, in prose and verse, to which our general criticism, as already expressed, will commonly apply. We cannot say much of her writings, which would be favourable, without coupling it with many qualifications. She had thought and fancy, was shrewd and speculative, was not deficient in courage, and was not unfrequently quite masculine in the vigour of her assault. But she lived in a bad set—mere twattlers and sonneteers—in a country town, in which she was rather a lioness, and which would have made the genius of Johnson succumb had he lingered there after manhood. Her associates and training rendered her imitative and affected, and she strained after prettinesses of speech in the fashion of Anna Matilda. In her day, that of the Della Cruscans had begun; a sort of rosy light which the young owlet might conjecture was the dawn. She was not superior to their absurdities, and she has shared their fate. She was made of better stuff, had better stuff in her, but never succeeded fairly in bringing it forth. Her prose is loose and slipshod, more strong than graceful, seldom rising into elegance, and frequently failing in propriety and ease. Her verse, monotonous, after the fashion of her models, was sometimes harsh and prosaic, laboured and redundant, feeble, at times, because of its very fury, and but too frequently of that sort which is said to be equally intolerable to gods, men, and magazines. It has served its purpose, the gourd history of a single season, and is now consigned to a region in which we hear nothing of its struggles. Her opinions on literary persons and things are rashly,—we had almost said, arrogantly—expressed, and are quite as frequently wrong as right. Her portrait by Romney adorns this volume of "Beauties." It gives the not unpleasing countenance of a damsel—scarcely yet of the *certain* age which is so uncertain—with regular features, eyes and nose tolerably large, a well cut mouth, good chin, and a forehead, which, though half hidden by an eternal mass of hair, looms out considerably and meets all the phrenological requisitions. Speaking of her personal appearance, Scott, who saw her in 1807, when she was an old woman, observes—"Miss Seward, when young, must have been exquisitely

beautiful, for, in advanced age, the regularity of her features, the fire and expression of her countenance, gave her the appearance of beauty and almost of youth. Her eyes were auburn, of the precise shade and hue of her hair, and possessed great power. In reciting, or in speaking with animation, they appeared to become darker, and, as it were, to flash fire. * * * Miss Seward's tone of voice was melodious, guided by excellent taste, and well suited to reading and recitation, in which she willingly exercised it. She did not sing, nor was she a great proficient in music, though very fond of it, having studied it later in life than is now usual. Her stature was tall, and her form originally elegant," etc. Her will is given by the editor of the "Beauties." By this will she bequeaths her literary writings to Sir Walter Scott, declaring him her editor, a task for which, we take it, he was no ways grateful. Her correspondence was, in like manner, assigned to Constable, the publisher, to be served up to the public at the rate of two volumes per annum. In this document she speaks of the lady of whom André was enamoured, and to whom he was engaged. Her name was Honora Sneyd. Her picture and self are thus described: "The mezzotinto engraving from a picture of Romney, which is thus inscribed on a tablet at top, 'Such was Honora Sneyd,' I bequeath to her brother, Edward Sneyd, Esq., if he survive me; if not, I bequeath it to his amiable daughter, Miss Emma Sneyd, entreating her to value and preserve it as the perfect, though accidental, resemblance of her aunt, and my ever dear friend, *when she was surrounded by all her virgin glories, beauty and grace, sensibility and goodness, superior intelligence and unswerving truth.* To my before-mentioned friend, Mrs. Powys, in consideration of the true and unextinguishable love which she bore to the original, I bequeath the miniature picture of the said Honora Sneyd, *drawn at Buxton, in the year* 1776, *by her gallant, faithful, and unfortunate lover, Major Andre, in his* 18*th year. That was his first attempt to delineate the human face; consequently it is an unfavourable and most imperfect resemblance to a most distinguished beauty.*"

André, it is known, had considerable talent in sketching. His portrait, drawn with pen and ink the night before his execution, and while in prison, is still preserved in the Trumbull collection

at New Haven. It is to his talent in this respect—in music—in poetry—his delicate and graceful tastes and accomplishments—that André is indebted for much of that halo which seems to have settled about his name and memory. The verses from his pen, "To Delia," which are to be found in some of our popular collections, may be taken as a fair specimen of his talents in this department. These lines, as they may be new to many, and as his name does not generally accompany them in the song-books, may very well find a place in this desultory article. They were sent, it is supposed, to his sweetheart, from America.

ANDRE'S FAREWELL VERSES.

Return enraptured hours
When Delia's heart was mine;
When she with wreaths of flowers
My temples did entwine:
No jealousy nor care
Corroded then my breast;
But visions, light as air,
Presided o'er my rest.

Since I'm removed from state,
And bid adieu to time,
At my unhappy fate
Let Delia not repine:
But may the mighty Jove
Crown her with happiness—
This grant, ye Powers above,
And take my soul to bliss.

Now, nightly o'er my bed,
No airy phantoms play,
No flowrets deck my head,
Each vernal holiday—
For, far from the sad plain,
The cruel Delia flies;
While, rack'd with jealous pain—
Her wretched André dies.

Sir Walter Scott, with his usual good nature, accepted the trust confided by Miss Seward to his hands, and compiled from her writings three goodly volumes, while her letters, in six volumes, were published by Constable & Co. These are all now safely

sealed, from farther critic doom at least, in that tomb, more inaccessible than that of the Capulets, which mortals, sadly sighing, call Oblivion. We shall not seek now to penetrate the place of their awful but not unnatural repose. Scott accompanied the works of Miss Seward with a kind notice of herself, and an indulgent criticism upon her genius. From this, if from no other sources, we learn enough to see how rash and ill-advised are the epithets which have been bestowed by our American reviewer on the character of this lady. Scott describes her as ingenuous and noble, amiable of temper, benevolent of heart, and rejoicing in a large and lavish friendship, which included some of the most distinguished names in British literature. How far we may, with such testimony before us, join with our critic in believing her to have been "a scurrilous and mendacious libeller," is a matter for the conscientious reader to determine for himself.

Of Major André we have some few more last words. Our estimate of his genius, as the reader has perceived, is not a high one. We have said, and perhaps shown, that he was a clever youth enough, with certain graces of manner and accomplishment, and certain agreeable talents, which, with an amiable temper, made him a good and desirable companion. But we do not see that he anywhere distinguished himself; we do not see that he was anywhere employed in such a manner as to distinguish himself; and the unhappy event, to which all his notoriety is due, is one in which he blundered inconceivably. That affair was one which, but for his own feebleness of resolve and purpose, his alarm and indecision, might have been conducted to a conclusion as lucky for his own, as it must have been disastrous to, the fortunes of America. But he lacked equally in coolness and discretion. On the encounter with the American militiamen, who seem to have been very common men, and to have blundered also, he became agitated, and boggled deeper and deeper at every sentence. A little military firmness, a little more of manly coolness, would have carried him safely through the danger. How he allowed himself to be entrapped by an equivocal phrase, how precipitately he committed himself to his captors, and how totally wanting in resource he proved himself throughout the affair, is all matter of history.

There is one portion of his history, however, of which little has

been said, and of which but little seems to be known. There is a mystery hanging about the career of André—a suspicion, which, if justly founded, would tend very much to deprive him of the sympathy which hitherto his melancholy fate has won for his memory. It is, that André was habitually a spy for the British general-in-chief, Sir Henry Clinton, and that it was no new service, that in which he perished. It is reported traditionally in America that he had been more than once employed in this degrading capacity during the American Revolution. In the "Sketches of the Life of General Greene," by the Hon. William Johnson, of the Supreme Court of the United States, the charge assumes a distinct form. It is contained in a note to the affair of Arnold, at page 208 of the first volume, which we give at length.

"'The following facts," says the author of the 'Sketches,' "may be relied upon.—It was an universal belief, as well in the British army as in the city of Charleston after its fall, that André had been in the city in the character of a spy during the siege. There is now living (1822) in this place, a respectable citizen who acted in the commissary department of the British army, during and after the siege ;—and another of equal respectability, and whose means of information were much greater, who was in Charleston during the siege, and remained in it until the evacuation, who will testify to the truth of this assertion. And this opinion is corroborated by the following fact. There were two brothers of the names of S. S. and E. S., both well known as men of property and respectable standing in society. The former was, to the last, faithfully devoted to the cause of the country ; the other was disaffected. During the siege, S. S. being taken sick, was permitted to go to his brother's house to be better attended. There, he was introduced to, and repeatedly saw, a young man, in a homespun dress, who was introduced to him by his brother as a Virginian, connected with the line of that State then in the city. After the fall of Charleston, S. S. was introduced to Major André, at his brother's house, and in him recognized the person of the Virginian whom he had seen during the siege. This he remarked to his brother, who acknowledged that he was the same, asserting his own ignorance of it at the time. S. S. related these facts to many persons in

his lifetime, and his veracity was unquestionable. Another citizen, W. J., at the time of André's capture, a prisoner at St. Augustine, also saw the supposed Virginian at the house of E. S. while S. S. lay sick, and his recollection of the fact was revived by S. S. soon after he had made the discovery of his real character. It is also known that the life of E. S. was afterwards assiduously sought after by Marion's men, on the charge of his treachery."

We may add to this, that it was the familiar boast of the British officers, after the fall of Charleston, that they were well served by intelligence from within, and knew every thing as soon as it took place, among the besieged. The enquiry, thus started, might be pursued with profit, just now particularly, when the public mind seems anxious to obtain and preserve whatever it can of the documentary testimony of the revolutionary period. Major André appears in history somewhat as the martyr to a peculiar occasion, —as one volunteering on an unusual service and under a particular exigency, at the earnest solicitation of his general. But we have no proofs of this urgent solicitation; and we have shown that there was no emergency, unless the anxious desire of Sir Henry Clinton, to effect the object upon which he came several years before, may be considered such—the conquest, namely, of the Americans. No such apology can be made on this occasion for the victim. If, on the contrary, it can be shown that the business in which he failed and perished was one habitual to his hands—a customary routine of duty, which never disturbed his sensibilities, nor disquieted his pride—it will materially tend to dissipate that purple halo which has hitherto made him an object of conspicuous honour in the British martyrology. He sinks then down into the category of those, who, knowing the penalties of their trade, deliberately embark in it, and in the end receive the wages for which they laboured.—We commend, while in this connection, to the critical examination of the reader, the clear and conclusive reasoning of Mr. Justice Johnson, in the work last referred to, in relation to the events of André's capture, and the course of the latter on that occasion, as properly determining, in connection with what is here written, the claims and position of the criminal in the estimation of the future. The

judge shows, very conclusively we think, that some of the instances of André's conduct, which have been set down as instances of magnanimity, were really proofs of his adroitness. His letter to Arnold, for example, advising him of his captivity—which the obtuse Col. Jamieson, in possession of all the proofs of Arnold's treason, yet suffered him to send—has been liberally construed into an anxious desire to save the latter and to prompt his flight. It was, in reality, the only obvious method, by which André could possibly hope to effect his own extrication. Had not Arnold given too much credit to Jamieson for sagacity, and been in too great a hurry to save himself—alarmed doubly by the reported approach of Washington—he would have quietly ordered the release of the prisoner, and the same moment might have found the two, safe from danger if not from shame, in the cabin of the Vulture.

ARTICLE IV.

WEEMS, THE BIOGRAPHER AND HISTORIAN.

"A better Priest, I trowe, ther nowher non is,
He waited after ne pompe, ne reverence,
Ne maked him no spiced conscience,
But Christes lore and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he fol'wed it himselve." CHAUCER.

SOME of your big-wigged gentry—your grave men after the fashion of Lord Burleigh—persons whom Nestor himself could, under no circumstances, persuade to laugh,—will take it in high dudgeon that we should dignify with the title of historian, the lively "rector of Mount Vernon parish." History, with this sort of persons, is matter of very solemn concern. You are to approach it with bowed forehead, unbonnetted front, and most philosophical exordium. It is not your light romances—your irreverent poetry. It is a sort of holy revelation of the past. It must be received as a religion by the present. It is to be treated of with veneration. There must be no laughter, no fun, no freedom. Hence, ye profane. Ye troubadours, be still, with your idle tenderness!—ye jongleurs, avaunt, with your mirthful minstrelsy! There must be an awful solemnity of look and accent when the dry bones of ancient facts are to be unburied. You must delve, you must drudge, you must shake a mystical head, till all rattles again, in order to be a historian after the modern acceptation. You must discuss your problems, however insignificant, with a corresponding minuteness. You must show a becoming sense of what is due to their probable importance in the affairs of nations—which took no pains to preserve them. Shall Tweedledum succeed in the contest against Tweedledee, and shall there be no corresponding emphasis of utterance—no awful consciousness, on the part of the hurrying multitude, at

the decision, for the future, of this long-vexed question? The philosopher of history shudders at the humiliating conjecture. To him, the discovery of a fractional fact in the affairs of buried ages, though it concerns nothing of more weight than a cracked household vessel in the palace of Calypso, is matter of graver import than the adjustment of a principle which involves the fate of a living people. The elucidation of an ancient cypher, or a fragment scrawl of papyrus, though it leads you no step farther, is matter of which to mould many volumes. To such as these, solicitous in mere minutiæ, toiling after the fact, though the fact be no ways important to the wholeness and the perpetuity of the truth,—chronicling all things with Bœotian stolidity, and, by sheer force of gravitation, making painful an otherwise pleasant study—Mason L. Weems was but a mountebank! He an historian, indeed! Why, he laughed over his work,—fiddled even while he wrote—danced during his moments of reflection—never plodded—never could plod,—scratched no bewildered head,—never was at a loss—never hesitated in his progress, but went forward with a promptness and singleness of vision, that never allowed itself to linger at details. If a small fact suited not his great fact, he shoved it aside as unfitted for his purpose. It was enough for him that, satisfied of his hero and his results, he made all things tributary to the glory of the one, and the proper finish of the other. Besides—greater offence!—he allowed himself to sport with the awful *manes* of the past. He suffered himself to fall into tears and laughter, as the case might be,—and sympathized, like any other human being, in the trials and the triumphs of his favourite. He yielded to the requisitions of humanity, and felt with his subjects—argued the case for them, forgetting that he himself was their judge; and, scorning the accumulation of mere glyphs, preferred a dramatic portraiture which would embody the story at a glance. 'How could such a man be a historian!'—exclaims the historian, *par excellence*, of our times. Such a man is a picture-fancier, a novelist, a rhapsodist,—what you please—but you must not abuse the dignity of a grave profession, by any misapplication of its title to him. This will never do!

Certainly, Weems was not a Niebuhr. There can be no mis-

take about that. He had too much imagination, too much sensibility, was too enthusiastic in his temperament, too fond, too eager, to pursue the cold and cruel sort of analysis by which the learned German acquired his renown. Nay, the chances are, that, could the good old Virginian be summoned from Hades to answer, he would stoutly deny the title of historian to Niebuhr, himself. "Niebuhr a historian," *quoth* Weems. "Ridiculous! Verily, I say to you he is nothing but a grave-digger in history—at best but an historical antiquarian—not even a resurrectionist!"

If we deny to Weems the merit of the historian, we cannot deny that he was a man of genius. His books have had a vast circulation, have exercised a wondrous influence over the young minds of the country, have moulded many of our noblest characters. His racy and excellent frankness—his orientalisms, his fluency, the fervency of occasional passages, the spirit of his dialogues,—the cleverness with which he would make his persons swear and swagger, and rebuke them for it,—the pleasing diversity of his pictures,—the great knowledge of life which they present, and the proper morality which elevated all that he wrote—have united to exercise a greater spell over young America, in past days, than almost any collection of writings within our experience. His style was a possession of his own. With all the life of Ossian, and something of his vein, he yet never lost himself in mist. Good sense, an admirable tact, and great shrewdness, lay at the bottom of all he said, and qualified all the extravagances of his speech. He combined, in some degree, the poet and the novelist—the one in the singular smoothness of his rhythm (for his prose is not unfrequently passable blank verse); the other, in the happy discrimination of his characters, and the adroitness with which he contrives to put them in opposition and contrast. His rapidity in moments of action is quite Homeric, and the excellent, characteristic speeches, which he puts into the mouths of his personages, would not discredit Plutarch. With all his extravagance, his fondness for colouring, his episodical anecdote, (most probably, in half the number of cases, invented for the occasion,) his books are yet faithful to all the vital truths of history. That his notions of the privileges of the historian were rather loose, is not to be denied.

He claimed for him the rights of an artist,—such rights as were exercised by Livy and by Froissart. With more veneration for the antique, for the pomps of aristocracy, and the mere pageantry of war,—and with less of the genuine democrat than distinguished his character—Weems would probably have been an historian after the fashion of Froissart. We should, in this event, have been greatly the gainer in details. He would have been more careful to accumulate. He would have travelled in all quarters in pursuit of facts and local histories, and his peculiar genius would have delighted in just such a collection of chronicles as those of the great compiler of the middle ages. He would have written more ambitiously, it is true, but the young would not have complained of his exuberance, and the old would have tolerated it in regard to the valuable material with which it was associated. He would have had more variety than Froissart—would not so completely have confined his sympathies to the great, but would have shared them, without regard to wealth or position, with the plebeian of character or virtue. Weems was a person of very catholic sympathies. He never appears to have resisted his humour, the direction of which seems always to have been innocent. He yielded himself at once to the situation and the subject, with a degree of *abandon* such as marks the conduct of the merry witches in the revels of Tam O'Shanter. With what jollity would he have delineated the scenes of low humour in common life—how faithfully would he have preserved the *patois* of the country, and the slang of the city. With what relish would he have detailed what was ludicrous in those great ceremonial feasts, in which Froissart refuses to see anything that is not dignified and decorous. The fun would be made to mitigate the fierceness,—the burlesque would qualify the stately—the jest blunt the sarcasm; the salt would finally be upset, and we should see the joyous buffoon in the centre of the group, where good old Froissart suffers us to see nothing but the prince. It would be a jewel's worth to us, could we have sent our worthy "frere," of Mount Vernon parish, along with Sir John Froissart, to hunt after historical romance together.

I know not whether I can assert a personal knowledge of the venerable biographer. I am not sure that the vague impressions

which I have of his air, gesture and physique, do not originate in the revelations of others. I will not be positive, but I certainly have some faint notion that mine eyes have been gratified, at a very early period in my life, with glimpses of his person. Uncertain memories flash upon me,—a passing vision of the good old man glides in before my fancy, and, with a beckoning sort of smile, queerly benevolent, and a good-humoured shake of the venerable white head, seems to assure me that I am not mistaken. But I own my doubts trouble me. My consciousness is a something betwixt light and shadow. I will not say that I ever saw the old gentleman, but I should be sorry to be sure that I have not seen him. His majestic form and noble features seem present to me, whenever I turn to his volumes, as if they were those of an old friend, well known to boyhood. And he was an old friend to boyhood. His books were among my earliest treasures, and I verily believe, from my own convictions, that they are among the very best books ever put into the hands of boyhood. They teach good morals in spite of their frequent fictions. They warm the heart with generous impulses, arouse patriotic sentiments, and so enliven the fact, that it wings its way into the confiding bosom of the urchin, so as to constitute an absolute portion of his memory.

When Weems first visited Carolina, somewhere in 1807 or '8, we had a great many men, grave dignitaries in the land. These were of the class of whom Shakspeare tells us, to whom even the smiles and sanction of Nestor, could furnish no license for similar excesses. To some of these he brought letters. They called upon him, according to the fashion of the day, with considerable ceremonial. Their best wigs were flowing,—their brightest and biggest buckles sparkled at knee and instep. They were to do the honours to a biographer. They were to hail the advent of a learned Christian priest of unquestionable morals,—the friend of Washington,—the Rector of Mount Vernon parish. You may reckon for yourself the amount of starch and solemnity, in countenance and costume, of these ancient dignitaries.

Weems had sent his letters of introduction, and waited the result with calmness and indifference. Something, *en passant*, on the subject of such letters. People seem to fancy that all that is necessary in giving letters of introduction is to be sure of the

morals of the bearer. A matter quite as important, is to be sure that you address them to the right persons. There should be something kindred in the nature and tastes of the two parties. To send an ascetic to a reveller—a merry wit to one of those leathern-headed worthies, who look the philosopher and are nothing but the dunce—is surely very much to misuse the friend to whom you design a courtesy. Some such blunder seems to have been committed by the friends of our parson when they prepared his despatches for the South. They were addressed to persons—very worthy persons, indeed—but who were utterly unlike the bearer. They prepared to wait upon him with the solemnities becoming his double claim as parson and biographer. We have shown their preparations; and, big with expectation, they awaited him in the saloon of one of the good old stately abodes of Ashley River. Merry music refreshed them as they sat. The violin was speaking briskly, touched evidently by a master hand, from within. The touch was equally nice and vigourous. It was no halting practitioner—no timid beginner—

"Scared at the sounds himself has made,"

but a veteran, who made the strings speak to every ear in the extensive household. Little did they guess who was the player! But the strains were approaching. Suddenly the door was thrown open, and in danced the fiddler. A white-headed, venerable man, in night gown and slippers, with a cheerful, bright mercurial eye, and of a laughing, sunshiny countenance, the expression of which was merry like that of boyhood. This was Weems. The shock was terrible. The big wigs never recovered from the surprise. You might have brained them with a feather. The musician bore in his hands the identical cremona, whose gleesome notes had assailed each impatient ear for the last twenty minutes. You may be sure he fell—fell immeasurably in their esteem. He was preacher and historian no longer. What had either of these to do with music—the violin, of all sorts of musical instruments. The hurdy-gurdy had been more tolerable. The banjo might have been excused on philosophical principles. But the violin! The interview was a short one and by no means satisfactory. Be sure that none of his visitors, after that day, could

be brought to confess a faith in Weems as a teacher. He perhaps never dreamed how much he had lost by the interview.

That violin was one of our rector's passions. It shared his affections, with Washington, Marion, and Franklin. It was a moral violin. Its strains were patriotic and cheerful. It embodied his smiles—it rounded his periods. He sermonized with its music in his memory; and if he scourged the offender, he did it with a sort of rhythmical and harmonious accent which carried the remedial balm with the sting. You may hear many curious anecdotes of Weems's violin. You know, of course, how deeply he offended the people of Edgefield district, in South Carolina. Education was slow to penetrate that region. A portion of it was called "The Dark Corner." Our biographer made it the subject of his tracts and sermons; and "The Ridge" grew fierce as many furies whenever Weems put forth a new essay on the old text, "Another murder in Old Edgefield." Some of the more angry boys threatened vengeance on the parson, and he travelled the district under frequent admonitions to "watch both ends of the road." The good old man was not without his prudence; but it could not avail him always. He had occasion once to traverse the tabooed region, which he did with considerable haste. The roads were wretched, and his wagon was heavily laden. He carried in it an ample collection of his pamphlets and histories. There were bundles of his own, and Marshall's Life of Washington; Lives of Marion and Penn and Franklin; besides, numerous tracts, under the imposing title, borrowed from Old Reynolds, of his "God's Revenge against Murder, Adultery," and all the deadly sins of the calendar; against each of which, in time, our parson had shot off much holy ordnance. Thus laden, his wagon sunk into a quagmire, from which his own unassisted strength utterly failed to extricate it. He was many miles from human habitation, the road was an obscure one, and the day was failing. Even a philosopher might have felt dubious of the situation. But Weems was a philosopher of a peculiar order. He had his remedy. Unhitching his horse, he suffered him to feed at leisure in the wood, while he himself, taking his violin from the case, took his seat on a log by the road side, and coolly proceeded to extort from wood and cat-gut such strains as, in that day and region, would have

mocked the best fantasias of Olé Bull. They were not less powerful in their effect. They drew to him an audience. Two wandering backwoodsmen suddenly emerged from the covert, thoroughly charmed to the spot by the old man's music. They lifted his wheels out of the mire, and he rewarded them in music. They asked him many questions, all of which he answered with his bow. They were satisfied with his responses, and he was thus enabled to escape in safety from the dangerous precincts. "I took precious care," said he, "to say nothing of my name. When they pressed the question, my fiddle drowned their words and my own too." Another story of this fiddle :

Our parson was one winter at Columbia. There came a mountebank to the town, exhibiting feats of legerdemain. He had with him a musician, who constituted no inconsiderable part of his attraction. But the fiddler fell dangerously sick on the very day of the night set for the performance. He lodged at the same tavern with Weems. The good old parson heard of his predicament, and went to him. He showed him his violin, gave him a few proofs of his mastery, and benevolently offered to play for him at the exhibition that night, only premising that a screen should be set to conceal his person. The stipulation was agreed to, and the night came. There was a large assemblage of people. The music proved to be of a superior order. The applause was tremendous ; and the vanity of our biographer getting the better of his prudence, he raised his head above the screen—thus making sure that the plaudits should not be wasted on the wrong person. The strange spectacle of the successful fiddler, who, the day before, had won the highest admiration in the pulpit, is said to have greatly increased the uproar.

Weems's first quarrel with Edgefield arose from the tracts entitled "God's Revenge against Adultery, or the Life of Rebecca Cotton," and an "account of the murder of Polly Findley, by her husband Edward Findley." It was the last of these works that contained the offensive inscription—"Another Murder in Old Edgefield." It was a long time before the Edgefieldians forgave him this indignity. Subsequent to his visit to South Carolina, he was the agent for "Marshall's Life of Washington," and travelled the whole southern circuit, preaching at every Court

House the session sermon, and bestowing the fee then allowed for that service, £3, in some becoming and charitable manner. At Newberry he devoted it to the education of a poor girl. This was somewhere about 1807 or 1808.

He was again a visiter to South Carolina in 1822 or '23. He was then a travelling agent for the publishers of Vesey junior. He had now become an aged man carrying indubitable proofs of the progress of time in his own countenance and thin white locks. He preached in the capitol, on "God is love," an excellent and touching sermon. Though professedly an Episcopalian, his doctrines are said to have approached universal salvation. To a man of his benevolent heart, such a tendency would seem natural enough. His sermons were not always solemn or touching things. His temper was too mercurial, at all times, to keep him thoughtful of these proprieties. Some of his discourses in Church and Court House, concluded with an exhortation to the people to buy his books; and the example of Washington,—who always did so,—was quoted with great unction. His looseness as an historian, is happily illustrated by an anecdote which he tells in the Life of Marion, of the son of Isaac Hayne, who was executed by Lord Rawdon for treason. He describes him as having studied the small-sword exercise in order to fight Rawdon, and whose intense excitement on this subject brought on a raving madness of which he died. The son in question lived to a good old age, and died in 1844.

Among his maxims was one about diet. "Eat a hearty breakfast if you can, a hearty dinner if you will, but no supper if you please." He frequently repeated with great complacency,—in allusion to his own son.—Genesis xlix. 3. "Reuben thou art my *first* born—my might and the *beginning* of my strength."

But our richest anecdote, at once of the *naiveté* and the characteristics of Weems as a man and writer, relates to his publication of the Life of Marion. We draw this from an original correspondence in the collection of a private gentleman. The materials for the Life of Marion, were furnished by General Peter Horry, his friend and Lieutenant. The work was put forth as the joint production of Horry and Weems. But such an annunciation could deceive nobody. The book was Weems, all over

and only. None but himself could be his parallel. The correspondence which follows is characteristic of both parties. The first is from Weems, dated Dumfries, (Va.) June 3, 1808.

"I hasten, my dear and honoured sir, to thank you for the very friendly epistle that I got from you, dated from High Hills of Santee. I beg you to indulge no fears that Marion will ever die, *while I can say or write any thing to immortalize him.* Indeed, such services and such servants to the American people ought never to be forgotten; I mean yourself and your illustrious Marion. Would to God you had a bard of fire to record your great and glorious deeds in such glowing colours, that your children's children might read and weep over what you did and suffered for them, when they were not able to fight for themselves. *I hope in three weeks to have it all chisel'd out in the rough cast. It will then take me about three weeks to polish and colour it in a style that will, I hope, sometimes excite a smile, and sometimes call forth the tear.* The embargo, 'tis true, as you observe, has made cash rather scarce, but I trust, I shall be able to get it printed, and very handsomely too. In all your letters to your amiable lady and Miss B—, please mention my name very affectionately. Pray God, you may find the waters medicinal indeed. Give me a very long letter.

Your affectionate friend,

M. L. WEEMS."

The italics are our own. It will be seen that our biographer wrought with no little ease and rapidity. The copy of Weems' life of Marion, (Philad. ed.) which is now before us, is a duodecimo of 252 pages. It is true that the material was furnished to his hands, and much of the volume is the direct issue of his own brain; but, allowing something for his other occupations,—and Weems usually had his hands full,—and the production is a proof of facility in 'book making,' which would not discredit the present day. The complacency with which the amiable old man speaks of preserving the reputation of his hero, is truly delightful. The vanity, however, is sufficiently harmless. It is curious to observe that he answers the doubts of Horry, as to the mode of getting means to print the book, with the modest hope that in spite of the embargo, and the scarcity of cash, he should still be able to get enough for the purpose;—and this, with reference to a book, which, for its size, has probably yielded more money to the publishers than any other volume of American manufacture. But they usually have the lion's share.

The next letter is after a lapse of eight months. 'Marion' is not yet published.

"DUMFRIES, Feb. 5, 1809.

"DEAR SIR:—It was not until this moment that I perused your friendly epistle, dated 16th Oct., at Dumfries. I need not assure you what secret pleasure it affords me to find from your pen that you were received and treated by my family with that hospitality which is due to all, but more especially to one to whom I am under such obligations. And the circumstance of your indisposition renders me doubly happy that Mrs. Weems and Fanny have enjoyed the welcome opportunity of adding a few days of comfort to your life. For the handsome things that you are pleased to say of the latter, as well as for the very friendly offers made her, I pray you to receive my best thanks. I owe much to kind heaven on an endless variety of accounts, and not the least of all, for giving me this charming child, whose personal and intellectual endowments, I am happy to say, are the least of her excellencies. But I fear she will never have the pleasure to see you in South Carolina. In common with the rest of my family, it is her wish to see you every summer in Dumfries and its vicinity. *I am happy to tell you, that in a few weeks, I shall put Marion to press.* It is not for me to express any other than a hope that it will prove acceptable to the public and not greatly disappoint your expectations. Many persons, and some of them, perhaps, pretty good judges, have been pleased to commend various pages which were read to them. It is my hope, at least, that it will become a school book in South Carolina, &c. Instructed as I am to appreciate the blessings of the equal and happy government we live under, I cannot otherwise than most highly esteem and value such men as Marion and Horry, whose patriotism and valour contributed so large a part to its establishment. Be assured then, that it is with pleasure I write this history, and, as I said before, I hope I shall write it to your satisfaction and to that of the friends of the illustrious Marion. My family joins me in best wishes for your speedy and entire recovery, with my great, good, loving compliments to your lady, and Miss B—, and Mrs. and Mr. I—, and all friends, I beg you to be assured of my most affectionate sentiments.

M. L. WEEMS."

P. S.—I hope to bring Marion with me in June."

But Marion, finished eight months before, was not forthcoming in June. The probability is, that the author could not so easily find a publisher, or possibly one on his own terms; or the embargo opposed a greater obstacle to the acquisition of the necessary cash, than, in his sanguine moments, he had anticipated. In December, we have the following from the same, to the same. He is now in Carolina.

"COLUMBIA, Dec. 13th, 1809.

"DEAR SIR:—It gives me great pleasure to be able to inform you, by our mutual friend Dr. Blythe, *that your ever-honored and beloved Marion lives in history. In other words, the history of the great Marion, from the documents you were so good as to give me, is finished.* How it will take, God only knows,

but if I may be permitted to hope, by the success which has crowned the Life of Washington, I would hope very much in its favor. You have no doubt constantly kept in memory, *that I told you I must write it in my own way, and knowing the passion of the times for novels, I have endeavoured to throw your ideas and facts about Gen. Marion into the garb and dress of a military romance. I trust that the figure which you make on the great stage of war, and by the side of your illustrious friend, will not at all displease your delicacy, nor lessen your well founded claims to the gratitude and affections of the country which you so immensely served.* The Life of Marion will, I hope, be at Charleston in three weeks. But, I don't believe that you will have the opportunity to see it earlier than the Races. With a thousand good wishes to your excellent lady, your amiable niece, and all your honored and beloved family, I remain with every sentiment of friendship and affection,

"Yours, M. L. WEEMS."

The reader has no doubt smiled at certain portions of this letter. But Peter Horry did not smile, unless grimly, like an old Saracen in the tapestry, with savage ideas. To convert his chronicle and the life of Marion—his sober facts,—his military speculations,—his own deeds,—those of his commander—into materials for a military romance, to suit the novel-reading taste of the times,—this was the malice and the mischief! It was the fashion of the thing that caused the trouble! We are reminded of a favourite scene in the Taming of the Shrew. Grumio confesses the cape, he is even willing to confess to two sleeves—but when the sleeves are "curiously cut,"—"there's the villainy!" And for the loose-bodied gown—"master, if ever I said a loose-bodied gown, sow me up in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a bottom of brown thread. I said a gown." Horry said a memoir, a life, a biography, a history—but, a military romance —this was not in the stipulations! The next letter of Weems shows what came of "cutting the sleeves curiously." It is headed by Horry, [no date—supposed to have been written from Columbia, S. C., Dec. 1810.]

"DEAR SIR:—I have lately heard, and with infinite astonishment, that you are displeased with the Life of Marion. *Though I have so heard, yet I can hardly believe it. What! is it possible that you can be displeased with a book which places both yourself and your beloved Marion in so conspicuous and exalted a light?*—a book that contains every fact that you yourself gave me—*a book that everywhere meets with unbounded applause—of which, I have orders for* 90 *copies, in one single county in Georgia—which has, in fact, changed the county of Wilkinson into that of Marion. A book, which, in short, sells better even than the*

Life of Washington. Now, that you should be displeased with such a book, is to me, very astonishing! I want very much to see you to procure some additional anecdotes for our 2d edition; and when I see you, if you can point out any errors, or any places where improvement can be made, I shall cheerfully attend to your instructions. My daughter, Fanny, *who has lately turned out poetess*, desired me to give her love to you. She says—*she fears that you are fickle.* God bless you. Yours,

"M. L. WEEMS."

The last insinuation of Miss Fanny, must have wonderfully tended to soothe the grim humours of the aged warrior. It was necessary.

It is very evident that our biographer had equally free notions of his privileges as were entertained by the historian Varillas, who, on being reproached that he had altered certain facts in history, eagerly replied: "What of that!—Have I not made them better?" The reader will also remember the anecdote of Vertot, who, on being furnished with certain additional particulars for the siege of Malta, answered coldly:—"My siege is already finished!" The astonishment of Weems, in regard to Horry's dissatisfaction at his book, could not have been simulated. That the very party should have been displeased who had been so much honoured, was, certainly, astonishing,—and this too, at the very time when a new edition was in press, when the popular demand far exceeded that for the Life of Washington, when ninety copies were called for in one county in Georgia, and when the glory of taking the county from Wilkinson, to give to Marion, was already on record. Certainly, it was very astonishing!—but such was the case. Horry, at length, writes thus, simply, we may suppose, to relieve the surprise of our biographer.

"GEORGETOWN, (S. C.) Feb. 4, 1811.

"DEAR SIR:—Having been very poorly for a long time, and in expectation of seeing you, I deferred writing you. Disappointed in the latter, and feeling myself better, I am enabled to resume my pen and shall freely and candidly give you my sentiments relative to Marion's history. A former letter of yours to me says,—"You have, no doubt, constantly kept in memory, that I told you I must write the history in my own way." *This, I do not recollect, but I well recollect that I repeatedly mentioned to you "not to alter the sense or meaning of my work, lest when it came out I might not know it; and, perverted, it might convey a very different meaning from the truth.* That officers were alive that well knew Marion's history, and would say, *as (perhaps they have said,)* I wrote

what was not true. I requested you would, (if necessary,) so far alter the work as to make it read grammatically, and I gave you leave to embellish the work,—*but entertained not the least idea of what has happened—though several of my friends were under such apprehensions, which caused my being urgent on you not to alter as above mentioned. Do you not recollect my sitting on the ground with you near the Georgetown Printing Office*, and urging you again on the subject of no alterations to the work—That you replied, (*seemingly out of humour*,) That, "When the work came out, you engaged I would be satisfied." I replied "That is enough;"—and, I recollect nothing farther passed between us afterwards on the subject. How great was my surprise on reading these words in your letter: "Knowing the passion of the times for novels, I have endeavoured to throw your ideas and facts about General Marion into the garb and dress of a military romance." *A history of realities turned into a romance!* The idea alone, militates against the work. The one as a history of real performance, would be always read with pleasure. The other as a fictitious invention of the brain, once read would suffice. Therefore, I think you injured yourself, notwithstanding the quick sales of your book. *Nor have the public received the real history of General Marion. You have carved and mutilated it with so many erroneous statements*, [that] your embellishments, observations and remarks, must necessarily be erroneous as proceeding from false grounds. *Most certainly 'tis not* MY *history, but* YOUR *romance.* You say the book sells better than Washington! The price of the one is much less than the other—[that] is the reason. Besides, persons unacquainted with the real history, buy and read your book as authentic. When known to be otherwise, [it] will lie mouldering on the shelves, and no more purchasers [will] be obtained. You have my work; compare [it] with yours, and the difference will appear. Yours is greatly abridged, and the letters contained in mine (which I thought much of,) are excluded from yours. You say, "you are surprised to hear that I am displeased with your book, particularly as it places Marion and myself in so conspicuous and exalted a light." *Can you suppose* [*that*] *I can be pleased with reading particulars* (*though ever so elevated, by you*) *of Marion and myself, when I know* [*that*] *such never existed.* Your book is out. My dissatisfaction of it is no ways material. You say you want to see me to procure some additional anecdotes for your 2d edition—and that, if I can point out any errors or places where improvement may be made, that you will cheerfully attend to any instructions. Could such improvement be really made, I fear for its fate—to be disregarded as my first performances were. A second edition would add to your emoluments. I cannot think I can amend my former work in your hands. Much time and deliberation were used to form, correct, and perfect the same. To attempt further, I fear, at this distant day, would detriment, rather than benefit. After having compared my work,—*which I call history, and which you call 'documents.'*—with your book, I wish you would send it me, in order that I may also compare it. I before wrote you for this, but received no answer. I thank your daughter Fanny for [her] remembrance of me. She fears that I am fickle. 'Tis not so. Tell her my numerous friends and acquaintances here know the many encomiums I constantly lavish in her praise. I know not her

equal. Sometimes, I think I make Miss B— jealous. I shall ever retain a grateful sense of the favours conferred on me by your most excellent and worthy family. Please to make my love and veneration to them. I am your well-wisher. (Signed,) P. HORRY."

Horry was a simple and single minded man. He had no guile. He was a brave and excellent officer, and an admirable lieutenant, in certain parts of the service, in the partisan warfare carried on by Marion. This letter is a manly one. Flattery did not blind him to the impropriety of any perversion of his facts. But, in truth, there was no serious perversion of them. We have before us a considerable number of Horry's manuscripts, his documents and a portion of a narrative of his own life, which included, with his own, a considerable part of the military career of Marion. The liberties which Weems took with Horry's documents, did not, in all probability, except in one or two instances, affect the substantial history. He simply exercised the privilege of the old Historians. He put speeches into the mouths of his heroes. He gave us long dialogues, in which he furnished, *pro* and *con*, the eloquence, the patriotism, and the sentiment of his interlocutors. And this deceived nobody. The deception was a very innocent one; for, it so happened, that his parties, thus furnished with speech, invariably talked like Weems himself. The ear mark was always visible, no matter who was the party.

It is amusing enough to note the simplicity with which Horry tells the venerable biographer, that "when he gave him permission to embellish his work, he entertained not the least idea of what would happen." And yet, it is scarcely possible to conceive that, knowing Weems, any one should remain in ignorance what to expect. Horry was, probably, the only person who could not tell exactly what was to happen. Weems's sole enjoyment was as an artist. He must shape his material, as he himself says in his letter, after his own fashion. He was ingenious in literary hashes; admirable in dove-tailing, in cutting, clipping, fitting, contriving and furbishing, wherever there were literary matters to be managed. He would have made a first rate daily editor. He could alternate between pen, paste, and scissors, with rare felicity. His arguments would be pieced out with the

most confident declamation, and his declamation furnish provocation for newer argument.

One source of Horry's annoyance is to be found in the fact that the veteran had some ambition of authorship himself. His pride was hurt, as well as his sense of truth, by this life of Marion. His name appeared in the title page as its chief author; he had been known by all his acquaintance to have been for years preparing it; yet, when published, it was apparent to all, that the glory of the thing was wholly Weems's. Horry could lay no claims to that eloquence, which, by the way, was of a peculiar and unmistakeable sort. Not a paragraph, not a sentence of his own handiwork, could he recognize. He had only desired the correction of his grammar, but he had been entirely corrected,—so completely, that nothing of his identity remained but his facts, and the perversion of these, while it left him without any claim to the work, gave him, fortunately, legitimate reason for complaint. The pride of authorship hung by him to the last. To the latest hour of his life, he was writing out his biography—bringing up his life to the closing hour of its sunlight. His memorials begin with his very boyhood, and relate the events of his career with sometimes painful minuteness. He tells some curious anecdotes of his audacity in love,—for he appears to have been much the slave to the tender passion—how he scaled walls to commune with his sweetheart, and how he narrowly escaped the snares of a Yankee damsel, who had marked him as her victim. And all this without the least tact or skill in composition, and with the simple garrulity of age. It was perhaps, fortunate, that Weems prepared his volume for the press, and made free with it as he did—the perversions of the truth alone excepted. By this means, attention has been drawn to a glorious reputation, which the American world will not willingly let die. Horry himself, fully deserving all that has been said of his worth, fidelity and bravery, owes something to the desire of the biographer, to convert his history into a military romance.

Of Mason L. Weems, apart from his life of Marion, and that correspondence which has been the occasion of this article, something farther may be said. We have every reason to think that he was an amiable and excellent man. The eccentricities and

audacities of his genius always led to errors on the right side. If he coloured his facts, it was not to the injury of his subject. If he suppressed the truth, it was only where it might tell against a human being. A remarkable instance occurs in relation to one of the subordinates in the Life of Marion; but, as the truth does not require to be told in this instance, we forbear the correction of his mis-statement of it, for the same reason that first prompted him to err. He did not fulfil all the conditions of Chaucer's priest, but much of the description will suit him narrowly.

"A Frere ther was, a wanton and a merry,
A Limitour, a ful solempne man,—
In all the ordres foure is non that can
So moche of daliance and faire langage.
He hadde ymade ful many a mariage,
Of yonge wimmen at his owen cost,
Until his ordre, he was a noble post,
Ful wel beloved, and familiar was he
With frankeleins over all in his contree,
And eke with worthy wimmen of the town
* * * * *
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesant was his absolution,
He was an easy man to give penance."

He was all this,—a merry man, fond of fun, society, and conversation,—none better pleased to marry off young women at his own cost.—To this purpose he frequently appropriated his occasional fees as a wandering preacher;—and certainly, none was better known to the 'Frankelein's' through the country;—for his absolution—a more indulgent and liberal priest—one more easy to give penance,—never existed. We add, from the same passage in Chaucer's prologue, omitting here and there a disqualifying characteristic:—

"Certainly, he hadde a mery note,
Wel coude he sing and plaien on a rote,
And knew wel the tavernes in every town,
And every hosteler and gay tapstere;
Curteis he was, and lowly of servise—
Ther was no man nowhere so virtuous.
Somewhat he lisped for his wantonnesse,

To make his English swete upon his tongue;
And in his harping, when that he had songe—
His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,
As don the sterres in a frosty night."

Weems, though a Priest, and worthy of his cloth, was yet very far superior to narrow fears and unworthy prejudices, by which too many of his order are prevented from complying with the larger requisitions of duty—bound to staid forms and a slavish discipline, the only merit of which is in externals. He had the courage to do what was fitting, and to seem what he was, in defiance of convention. He could make merry at a wedding with the rest—the music never drove him off,—and thus, by giving countenance to what is innocent and natural in pleasure, he prevented youthful hilarity from rushing to excess. He could visit "tavernes," and very well knew the "tapsteres" thereof, by name; but it was just in such wise as he knew all men, made in the image of God, and worthy, for that reason if no other, of human consideration and respect;—as he knew the outcast, the profligate, the lowly and the little hoping;—as a Priest, properly solicitous of his trusts, should know and seek those whom his brethren are but too apt to abandon or avoid. He had no fears of the vulgar. Satisfied of his own integrity, and satisfied that the eye of God was always more certainly upon him than that of man, he never seemed to give himself any concern whether he was seen by the latter at all. Nay, we are not sure, but that there was a something in the social aspects of a tavern, which, apart from its supposed excesses, might have found favour in his sight. There, he met with all the varieties of character, just such motley groups as old Chaucer rode with to Canterbury—men of all fashions and tastes—from all quarters of the globe,—who could teach as well as learn, and, like himself, season the sermon with a story, and the story with a song. If he yielded a hearty laugh, in sympathy with that which he might hear at such places, it was the expression of a frank and generous impulse, the utterance of his social nature, his pliant mood—and not any concession to, or sympathy with, licentiousness. His nature was Catholic, entirely human, loving man in spite of his fall, never insisting on himself, and, in the consciousness of his own recti-

tude, in the security afforded by his own strength, yielding something of exterior, by way of encouragement, to the profligate, or the doubtful, whom it might be easy at any moment, in the event of trespass, to repel.

If you say that he sometimes had an unwonted manner of showing his religion, we answer,—this was only because of the unwonted independence of his character. Never was man more amiably impulsive. His religion was not the less pure because of his costume,—it was in fact rather the better for his laxity in this respect,—since it was a religion so wholly regardless of mere externals. And here let us remark that we owe some acknowledgments to those brave men, in every land, who risk themselves against social forms and prejudices, whenever these become so blind or so wilful, as to confound matter with manner, the substantial with the semblance, and, of an interest so vital as that of the moral and spiritual nature, make, in the language of Carlyleism, a mere miserable simulacrum. This is a common mistake with the world, which is continually losing to classes that which it is becoming it should treasure up wholly within its own keeping. It is also, we may remark at closing, one of the true reasons why virtue loses so much with the lapse of years, even against the probable progress of civilization. Forms and symbols are made to stand for truth, until, in process of time, the image becomes the thing and absorbs all the love and homage which the substance only should command.

ARTICLE V.

THE HUMOUROUS IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH LITERATURE.

Some considerations upon British humour, and what remains of it, to us in America, as joint inheritors with our European brethren, of the original stock, are forced upon us by the perusal of the work before us.* We have more than once, accorded to the writings of Mr. Mathews, the critical attentions of this journal.† His papers on the Copyright Question, and his political and social poems "On Man," have been the subjects of our elaborate consideration. In the examination of these performances, a certain sturdy independence of phrase and suggestion, and certain inherent qualities of originality, which we thought him to possess, determined us to devote a leisure day to the whole body of his writings, which were then understood to be in course of preparation for the press. These have since been given to the public, and we proceed to lay before our readers, the fruits of our examination into their pretensions. Pretensions there are enough. Mr. Mathews is not the man to doubt his own claims, or to suffer assault upon his position. A considerable self-esteem, which is inseparable from the earnest temperament, gives him confidence and courage. He utters himself without misgivings, and strips to his subject without fear. The vastness of his task does not appal him. The difficulties in the way of his progress scarcely move him to hesitate, and, with a rare mixture of the rashness of youth with the strength of manhood, he attempts many labours of the class which Milton speaks of as present to his aims in

* The various writings of Cornelius Mathews, embracing The Motley Book, Behemoth, The Politicians, Poems on Man in the Republic, Wakondah, Puffer Hopkins, Miscellanies, Selections from Arcturus and International Copyright. Complete in one volume. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1843.

† The Southern Quarterly Review. Charlestown, S. C.

mature life—"things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." Mr. Mathews is a very ambitious as he is a very industrious person. It is his good fortune that his industry is disposed to keep pace with his ambition. In that is his hope. His writings fill a goodly octavo, large page and small print, of nearly four hundred pages. He is still a very young man; yet here we have his labours—occupying a space of only five years—in no less than half a dozen very dissimilar departments of production. He appears before us as poet and dramatist, novelist and politician, essayist and critic. This is a dangerous versatility, which, as foreign to the usual allotment of endowment among men, the great body of readers are always disposed to resent and to deny. Ordinarily, we are thus sceptical ourselves. We very much doubt the marvels of your universal genius. We hold your "Jack of all Trades" to be something of a *charlatan*, or, if not exactly this, to be still less fortunate in the possession of certain slender superficialities which are more likely to delude himself than his neighbours. He takes up all tasks, and botches all, or leaves them all unfinished. Our counsel to all honest workers, in whatever craft, is the cool selection and close pursuit of some one single object. In this lies the wholesome secret of success. You can no more bow at two altars, than you can serve two mistresses with safety; and in literature and art, especially, the muse is exceedingly jealous of the wanderings of her worshippers. She accepts no divided allegiance, and furnishes even temporary desertion with grievous disabilities. Proficiency of any kind, is attainable only through devotion. That devotion, as well to art as to heaven, must be as exclusive as it is patient and unremitting. The sacred fires must never be suffered to go out, though for a moment only, before that shrine to which our service has been pledged; and life and faith must suffer no diversion to other or inferior objects, from that duty to which our first fresh inclinations, and our ascertained endowments, will naturally lead and incline us. The division of labour, according to peculiar fitness and endowment, seems as proper to the author as to any, the humblest worker, in the most ordinary branches of mechanics.

But this necessity has relation only to him who has properly survived his beginnings, and is fairly started on the great moral

business of his life. The beginner, particularly in literature, must and will try himself in every department of composition. It is Leigh Hunt who tells us, somewhere, in one of his very pleasant essays or prefaces, that when he first commenced scribbling in verse, he imitated all the masters,—tried all departments of song,—the epic, the dramatic, the lyric,—left no measure unemployed, and scarcely any theme unsung. Nothing was more natural. This was not a peculiarity of the Cockney poet.—Imitation is the process by which incipient genius exercises itself,—by which it acquires confidence in its own powers,—learns the use of its tools, and prepares itself, by emulation of the tried and known, to arrive at such a conviction and mastery of its own strength, as will enable it freely to exercise a native and independent wing. It is not found, after the first few years of an author's life, that he indulges much in various composition. He generally settles down upon that department in which he believes himself most fitted to excel. Thus, the great poets, or dramatists, the Homers, the Shakspeares, the Dantés, the Miltons, etc., have usually adhered to single fields of exercise. A natural law inevitably leads to such a resolution. By addressing the constant mind to one branch of composition, the utterance becomes more ready, and the performance no less easy than perfect. With facility of expression, the thoughts acquire freedom; and the genius of the poet, unrestrained by bonds of speech, glows and exults in the untamed exultation of a confident and familiar strain. Until this facility is acquired, the genius is necessarily fettered and enfeebled. The toil of a difficult articulation, naturally impairs the freedom and the strength of thought; and, in due proportion as the author finds it difficult to make his ideas malleable by speech, will be his readiness to abandon them, however excellent they may appear even to himself. Hence, his practice in all fields of song,—his proneness to imitate that of his predecessor,—and the readiness with which he yields himself, in the flexibility of his own gristle, to the influence of existing models. It is but proper that he should be as various in his efforts, as he is constant in their exercise, if he would acquire that freedom of speech which is his first essential object.

But this belongs only to a very early period in his career. It

is only while he is immature, that he is thus imitative. With the acquisition of utterance, he should attain his freedom. He should then think out his own laws, and toil in obedience to the nature which works within him. To continue striving at numerous kinds of composition, only proves continued immaturity, or a prurient vanity, which baffles concentration, and, though it may provoke the passing wonder of contemporaries, will scarcely ever be able to command the lasting honours of posterity. The mind must fix upon its scheme of progress, and go forward sternly, in its one development. An aside for contemplation or amusement, —a playful, momentary indulgence with a foreign muse,—is not considered as an objection here, any more than we should consider as an impropriety, a glance bestowed upon a strange beauty, by one who has a young wife of his own at home. But there must be no liaison. We must entertain no vain notion that, because of success with one muse, we can easily command the favours of all the rest. The error is one quite as offensive to art, as, in other respects, it would be to morality.

The necessities of the American author, however, make him somewhat an exception to this rule, and confer upon him certain privileges. In the narrow field which he occupies, with so little demand for his labours in any one department, he is compelled to exercise a certain degree of universality. The conventional state of the country does not allow of that concentration of his thoughts upon the one object which is essential to its complete attainment. That division of labour, in the hands of classes, which marks the progress of civilization in the old countries, is at present denied to ours,—at least, in most of the departments, which call especially for intellect. Thus, with us, the pleader is at once counsellor and attorney,—the priest is magistrate and schoolmaster,—the physician is chemist and apothecary ; and the author combines in himself as many of the offices of literature as he can possibly bring to bear, in supplying the wants of the several departments from which he hopes to obtain his recompense. His two volumes per annum brought forth by the regular publisher, do not interfere with his duties as editor of, or contributor to, the quarterly or monthly magazines. He throws off his monthly lyric for the popular singer, his essay for the Lady's

Book or Annual,—and, by a *tour de force*, which is not often witnessed in any other country, contrives, at odd intervals of leisure, to concoct something, whether tragedy or farce, for the honours of the stage at Park or Bowery. This history is comprised in the career of Mr. Mathews, as it is numerously instanced in that of other American authors. The collection before us has been the fruit of just such a diverse appropriation of his time; and, in considering the claims of his workmanship, we are to make the necessary allowances for such deficiencies—in the classical propriety and symmetry of his labours—as must be inevitable from the mode in which they were prepared and given to the world. Until literature shall arrive at the dignity of a profession among us, our writers must continue to work under disadvantages, which will impair their confidence in themselves, lessen the strength of their conceptions, and materially diminish the force and beauty of their productions. How long this state of things is to continue, is beyond present speculation; since the genius of the country, unlike that of any other known land, labours under the paralysis occasioned by its indebtedness to other regions, for the largest portion of its thought and literature. Until we can untrammel the nation in this respect, gain our intellectual freedom, and set up wholly for ourselves, the struggles of the native mind must be equally painful and unpromising.

Our previous notices of Mr. Mathews, will somewhat lessen our present labours. We shall say nothing here of his pretensions as a poet, having fully discussed them in a former article. Nor will it be necessary that we should say any thing further of the several excellent papers which he has put forth on the subject of International Copyright. It is due to him to say, that he has been one of the most earnest and active in this cause among our literary men. Would we might believe that his labours had been attended by any corresponding measure of success. But this is not so certain. The measure still drags on, like a wounded snake, in our national councils; its prospects impaired by two circumstances,—the active hostility of manufacturers, whose interests, it is supposed, such a concession might injuriously affect; and the indifference of our statesmen themselves to any measure to which the public are indifferent. Be-

tween these two forces, the claims of the national mind have but slender chance of present consideration. We must probably wait the advent of statesmen who will not content themselves with looking solely to the existing condition of the popular understanding, or its undigested will in matters of legislation; but where the subject involves a great principle, is obscure by reason of its own nature, or little valued because of the occult or indirect character of the influence which it exercises upon social affairs—who will devote themselves, heart and soul, to its development, till men shall come generally to acknowledge the necessity for its recognition.

We have said that Mr. Mathews is an ambitious writer. This is shown by the selection of his topics, no less than their variety. These topics are chiefly of a kind to require the exercise, in a large degree, of the imaginative faculty. They leave to the author a large discretion, and are difficult of treatment in due degree as they are indefinite and indistinct. Thus, among these writings, and one of the best among them, we find "Behemoth, or the Mound Builders," a bold and fanciful legend, well written, vigorously wrought out, and sometimes beautifully descriptive. It is an attempt to supply a vast break in our history, to afford us a glimpse, and provide at least one chronicle of that shadowy and mysterious race, by which the wondrous mounds and monuments were left, over which we grope and stumble so frequently while penetrating our deep and pathless forests. Another of these subjects, the very choice of which indicates the audacity of one assured of his resources, is entitled "Wakondah." "Wakondah," in the dialect of one of our forest tribes, signifies the "Master of life." It was thus, by a periphrasis, that they named the deity, avoiding, as is the case frequently with a superstitious people, the direct utterance of the sacred name. The subject here is an Indian tradition. It appears as a fragment of verse—the single canto of a narrative, which we trust our author will find leisure and the mood to finish. What is here, affords us, as we think, one of the best specimens of his strength in poetry. As a proof of his faculty as a *builder*—the highest evidence, perhaps, of poetical endowment—we can say nothing, as the work is incomplete. What is given us appears rather as the vestibule, the porch, or

entrance to a structure of proportions and material equally pure, noble, and majestic. We could, it is true, point to numerous defects and deficiencies; but these are of a sort not to impair, to any considerable degree, the merits of the performance, which is classical in form, and of a character at once simple and antique. It is not, however, so much in the details as in the design and general conception of these two productions that we find our author's excellence. That he should single out these unshapen masses for the exercise of his chisel, betrays a rare confidence in his own powers, and a manly determination to follow in no beaten track. And this is courage; and this courage comes from resources from which other fruits may yet be found to ripen. No man attempts the vague, the mystic, the shadowy and imperfect in literature, unless stimulated by a very active and subtle imagination. Subjects of this class are not to be handled, are never to be approached, unless by those who are confident in the possession of native and original resources. Their materials are not to be found along the highways, but are to be evolved by patient and deeply penetrating thought, winged for exploration by genius, acting through fancy and imagination. History is mute if you question her upon the matter; tradition but mumbles unintelligibly, as in a dream, denying nothing, yet withholding everything; and it is for the imagination boldly to seize upon his muse, as Alexander of Macedon the priestess of the oracle, and in her silence to prove himself irresistible. In labours of this class, the author can rely only on himself: books give no succour; there are no mile-posts, no indicia, along the route. There is no route; he must make it. What is done must be done, *ab ovo*, from one's own brains, as the spider weaves her web—fine, symmetrical, hanging in air, and glistening in the sunbeams—out of her own bowels. The selection of such topics may betray presumption, but they are just as likely to denote courage. The choice of the theme is *prima facie*, to a certain degree, the proof of a capacity for its proper use. Such themes are seldom chosen by ordinary men. They content themselves usually with the thoroughfare—the true man never. He always aims with courage, even when he aims beyond the possible; and his courage, even when he fails, seems to lend something like a sanction to his audacity.

It is because of the courage which Mr. Mathews has displayed in these and other writings that our attention has been drawn to his endeavours. Their perusal has satisfied us of his possession of powers which, with good training and in process of time, will lead to performances which his countrymen will cheerfully appreciate. To say that he is what he should be—that he is even in the right way to do what his capacities will justify him in attempting—is assuredly not our purpose. He has some very grave faults of thought and manner; and his very intensity of mood is something against him in the particular departments of art to which his performances generally incline. This intensity of mood, simplicity, and sternness of manner, which would be fitly exercised in such works as Behemoth and Wakondah, are entirely misplaced in the popular legend or the domestic novel. But they are characteristics of our author's mind; and the question with him must have reference to the subjects suitable to characteristics which are equally paramount and inflexible. Of the two works which we have detached from this collection, and subjected to particular remark, we do not desire to convey the idea that they are very perfect, or even very successful productions. It would be quite unreasonable to expect such from the hands of a writer who is yet new to our public, and who does not fulfil all the conditions of his subject, and has not yet learned to put in requisition all his faculties for the task before him. These writings were also, we may remark, the fruits of his first experiments. It may be that, were he now to attempt these topics for the first time, he would adopt other agents for his action, and, in some degree, modify his designs. But, taken as they are, with all the crudenesses of youth, and a hurried first conception, upon them, they denote imagination and passion, considerable powers of description and adaptation, a fine sense of the picturesque, a just notion of what is harmonious and delicate, of invention in structure, and of good taste and facility in the use of means and accessories. There is a statuesque simplicity in the proportions of "Behemoth" which is very imposing, and would have been perfect but for the unseemly introduction of certain ludicrous agents which impair its harmony. Such is the episode of Kluckhatch. The dignity of outline which marks the story is blurred by this excrescence. There is

so little of the dramatic in this performance—the action is so simple, and the agents necessarily so few—that anything calculated to conflict with the simplicity of the scheme, and the repose of its outline, is felt as a rude deformity. Works of this nature will not suffer the slightest introduction of incongruous elements. The story is one of tragic uniformity ; to engraft upon it any Gothic additions must be injurious. In a tale of trial, of a terrible and strange solemnity, the ludicrous shows as revoltingly in the connection as would the humours of Policinello in the midst of the divine agonies of Prometheus. No such objection can be urged to the portion which we have of "Wakondah." That, so far as written, is simply beautiful—a lovely piece of description—cold somewhat, and frigid like frost-work ; but it has a tinge of the morning sun upon it, and the purple flush which it wears is sufficient to soften, though it may not warm, the expression. In "Behemoth" we have numerous passages of great strength and fervour. The terrors of the country, under the ravages of the mighty and massive monster of the wild and sea, are well described and illustrated ; and the stern, unbending nature of Bokulla, his patriotic devotion and unyielding resolution, present a fine idea of the heroic character. The great defect of the story—a defect inseparable, perhaps, from the subject—is in the final mode of action—the means by which the monster is overcome, and the country saved from desolation. We are not prepared to recognize the means for his destruction as adequate to the purpose, when we remember the wondrous powers assigned him in the first instance by the author—powers which so completely mocked at all the strength, in numbers and in battle, of the people whose plains he traversed with the foot of devastation. But the subject was one of great difficulty, and might well have embarrassed the skill and baffled the powers of a far more experienced writer than Mr. Mathews. It was one, too, which, we fancy, might have been much more easily discussed in verse than prose—might have been more available in the hands of the poet than the novelist. The very employment of verse tends to reconcile the reader to certain extravagancies which he would resent in prose narrative, and he rather expects a freedom of fancy in the one class of writings which would revolt him in the other. The fine ballad of "The Dragon

of Rhodes" is, by the way, very kindred in its topic, though its relations are not so numerous, and its aim, as a story, not so high as "Behemoth." We venture to say, that, if the latter subject had been presented to the mind of Schiller, he would not have hesitated a single instant as to the necessity of treating it in a purely poetical manner. He would have felt the dangers and difficulties in the way of a prose narrative, which, whatever may be the character of the style employed, or the proem of the author, necessarily promises a greater soberness of fancy, and a sterner grasp upon the reins of imagination, than is necessary where the story is told in verse.

But we gather from both these compositions, as well as from other writings of Mr. Mathews, that his mind is essentially undramatic. He is better at narrative and description, and evidently prefers expressing himself in the first person. He seems fettered and frigid when his business is to develope his story through the medium of other agents. He does not succeed in grouping, and seems to lack the required flexibility—the capacity to enter into the characters of his persons, and to speak only in obedience to their necessities. His mind is of the order that never goes out of itself—that refuses to subject its own to the requisitions of others, and persists in informing his dramatis personæ with his own individuality. He has too much intensity of purpose to escape from this,—becomes himself too much interested in what is going forward; and, taking part, and sympathizing with his favorite ideal, yields to him entirely that regard which should be divided with critical justice equally among his group. Lord Byron's mind was of this order, and it belongs in great measure to the *egoisme* of the age. It is the character of Wordsworth's muse, of Shelley's, of Keats', of Moore's, of nearly all of the great modern English writers, with the almost single exception of Walter Scott, who, in this power of yielding himself to the character he wishes to portray, comes nighest to Shakspeare of all the authors of our period. Mr. Mathews, with the proneness of youth to try all things, and the ambition of real talent to conquer them, has attempted the drama, but, as we are inclined to think, regarded as matter for the stage, with very indifferent success. "The Politicians—a comedy," is one of the

works of this collection. This is a sufficiently lively and spirited performance,—more satirical than comic,—more smart than humourous,—a pleasant satire enough,—sharp, but not malignant, full of innocuous censure, but not biting, and perhaps rather too much exaggerated in its limning for success. We are not told that it was brought upon the stage, or, if so, that it was successful. We should be inclined to say that it would better suit for perusal than performance. Bating what has been already said of the absence of any peculiar dramatic ability of our author, we are prepared to discover a special unfitness for the stage in the comedy before us. It wants action,—the dialogue is too much elaborated,—and the persons of the drama have characteristics too nearly on the same level, too decidedly of one order, to admit of much variety in the several parts they play. We can better illustrate this objection by a reference to the names of the characters. Thus, we have "Brisk," a "Candidate for Alderman," "Gudgeon, the rival candidate," and these are followed by such persons as Messieurs "Crowder," "Botch," "Glib," "Old Crumb," "Bill Baffin," "Tom Lug," "Joe Surge," "Mrs. Gudgeon," "Kate Brisk," and so forth. The scene is laid in the city of New York. The story is purely local, and the author gravely assures us that his purpose is a national drama. Now, the first question that occurs to us, is, whether society in New York is made up wholly of "Brisks" and "Gudgeons," and "Crowders," and "Botches," and "Baffins," and "Lugs," and "Surges?" What can you expect from such people, thus designated? Nothing but what is low,—no objects but what are inferior,—no characteristics but what are common-place and deficient in dignity. The very names of the persons are conclusive of the design of the author, to give us an unqualified, unredeemed picture of vulgarity,—of slang and cunning and stupidity,—of thoughts and opinions without sentiment or strength, and purposes without moral or elevation. There is nothing attractive in the bill of fare. There is nothing natural in the combination. Good comedy is suggestive of society,—society as it is, and not as it appears through the jaundiced medium of a disappointed expectant, or a surly and impatient cynic. Look at all the better portions of the old English comedy,—of comedy in its best day

every where. You will find that, although there are many common, and some vulgar, people among the characters, there is always a fair sprinkling of the dignified and the noble, and these almost always indicated by their names. We need but refer to the best works of Congreve, Cumberland, and Geo. Colman. Nay, Shakspeare shall content us with a fitting illustration. We turn to the "Merry Wives of Windsor," a story from humble life avowedly, yet with just such an admixture of the high with the humble, the several constituencies of society in such combination,—as we find ordinarily in society, and by which that curious moral amalgam is kept from becoming utterly monotonous and wretched. There is the professed humourist, Sir John Falstaff; Fenton, Shallow, Slender, Ford, Page, Sir Hugh Evans, Dr. Caius, Bardolph, Pistol, Nym, Robin, Simple, Rugby, "sweet Anne Page," and dear, bustling Mrs. Quickly. Here we have names, some of them unusual, none of them gross or unseemly,—all apparently gathered from the ordinary walks of the city. Probability is not outraged at the very threshold of the performance. We are not warned to be on the lookout for monstrosities. On the contrary, life as it is, is presented to our survey,—a just picture of the world in which the scene is laid, and without which the boast of the drama, that of holding the mirror up to nature, would be excessively idle. If one or two of the names, "Slender" and "Shallow" and "Pistol," for example, are unusual, they are not low, and are plainly suggestive, not broadly so, of what we are to expect from the characters. The rest are ordinary names, with a few somewhat aristocratic in their sound, and which naturally contribute to the naturalness of the design. These better names are employed to idealize the rest, and to show society as it is,—the good and the bad, the high and the low, the noble and the mean,—in juxtaposition, it may be, but working together, as we ever find the parties, willingly or otherwise, in the common toils of social progress. The quick instincts of the dramatic veterans of the days of Elizabeth, led them at once to perceive that any unmixed representation of inferiority—not to say vulgarity—must really defeat the purposes of satire, no less than comedy. We do not see society any where in this totally crude condition. No where are its members utterly un-

redeemed by some sort of classification, by which the mass of ordinary herdlings are kept from the dominion of brute nature, by the presence and interposition of others, a sacred few, whose countenance still gives them claim to a higher position in the regards of man, the absolute right to which must yet depend on their own resolute progress and upward looking will.

But our author aims to satirize the petty politicians of the country. His aim is satire, rather than society. But this is an evasion of the objection, since satire, to be successful, must consider society first, last, and entirely. The objects are inseparable. It is only by a proper application of the moral and social standards of the country to the condition of things you wish to scourge and overthrow, that you can hope to be successful in your satire. To detach the selfish politician, or the stupid victim of his arts, from the community whose fate depends on the honesty of the one and the intelligence of the other, would be a wholly absurd, even if it could be a possible proceeding. But the thing is impossible, and the author who attempts it must incur the very judgment which we hold to be inevitable from the fate of our author's comedy. His case equally fails in a political and artistical point of view. If society rejects his argument, the politicians of the country are quite as obtuse, and regard it equally a failure as it applies to them, or to their opponents. This must be the fate of every such gross exaggeration. Suppose we suffer him to make his case for himself—to sift society as he pleases, and, detaching the politicians of the community wholly from those who are no politicians, but with whom the politicians are connected by daily sympathies and duties, to establish a community of his own, solely composed of the latter class. This, in fact, is what our author has already done. This is the staple of his comedy, and mixed more freely with other ingredients, we should hold it very good staple for satire and censure. Let the scene be laid in New York or Philadelphia, Boston or Charleston, it matters not—and where do you see the masses ruling the country, or the party through their most inferior persons? Where do you see the "Gudgeons," and the "Botches," the "Crumbs," and the "Crowders," leaping audaciously to the high places, calling the meeting to order, and prescribing what they shall do, and whom

they shall elect? To assert this is simply to take the cue from the British traveller, with whom this sort of absurdity is conventional language, to which nobody attaches the least importance, unless, indeed, it be some newly fledged British reviewer. Beyond these two parties, nobody sees anything of this history, and if we look to the fact, as we may, with calmness, and without regard to our political bias, we shall see that, in spite of the mutual misrepresentations of the party press, there are no parties in the world more admirably served and officered than those of whig and democrat, or Republican and Federalist, in the United States. The truth is, the American people everywhere, with that wonderful shrewdness which is their paramount quality, have a peculiar knack, in spite of their levities, of finding out, in every community, not only who are their cleverest, but who are their very best men. There is always talent, and frequently eloquence, in those who are summoned to do their business. These are qualities which the great masses inevitably require. Let any underling attempt to lead them—any one whom they discern wanting in any of the necessary qualities of talent, industry, decision, and integrity, and how soon do they revolt. How soon do they shake themselves free of the mere pretender, whose specious arts may have deceived them for a while, turning to better counsellors, and less questionable authorities. Mere talent does not suffice. It may attract, but will not content, or not long—may please, but does not satisfy—does not obtain that perfect confidence which the true leader, or the active agent of a party is required to possess. The politician who is discovered to be characterless, is soon distrusted, whatever be his talent,—and no talent can long cover his deficiencies among a people so jealous of their agents, and so vigilant in their watch upon them. He is whistled down the wind with a rare facility, and told by Demus, but without any of the regret which mingles in Othello's dismissal of his favourite lieutenant, "Never more be officer of mine!" It is not denied that the mere tactician, the simply smart and cunning demagogue, obtains in his township or parish a temporary sway and ascendency, but it does not last. He may be listened to with admiration as a speaker, but not trusted as a leader. The mass among us have an exquisite faculty, as we once heard said by an un-

coated democrat in Tammany Hall, of extracting the juice from the orange, before they fling away the skin. Now, to make this satire successful, it should have been as nearly as possible an exhibition of the living manners, the daily passing acts, of the society from which it professes to be drawn, with just such an exaggeration of outline, in all phases, as to idealize the common forms and phraseology of life. This is the happy art of the dramatist, whether he walk in the regal steps of tragedy, or in the livelier paces of the comic muse. The minor objections to "The Politicians," as a performance for the stage, are several. It will be necessary, perhaps, to distinguish one. Our author has not yet learned the art of condensing a character into a sentence, and conveying a history, by a brief word—a glance—an exclamation—to both actor and audience. His characters speak little essays. The one suggests a text to the other, which moves him to descant; and, instead of so speaking and acting as to hurry forward the action, they dilate on casual matters, deal in analyses of their neighbours and of the opposite party, and waste time in dialogue which should be spent in action. These essays read very well,—the play reads very well,—if you can only dispossess your mind of the natural objection, that it does not give a fair picture of society. Exaggeration, indeed, is scarcely necessary, where you aim to ridicule and show off the scandal-things of party. These are sufficiently shocking, set forth as they are. Where they are the subject, the satirist to be truthful must be terrible. Their filth, their falsehood, their selfishness, their slang, their beastly beer-barrels, and almost as beastly songs,—these furnish sufficient material, ready to the hands, that not only do not need, but would be absolutely impaired, for the purposes of satire, by any exaggeration. With every disposition to think well of "The Politicians," as a drama, we are constrained to consider it only as a lively story, broken up into dialogue; and its very merits are of a class which persuade us that its author would always succeed better in narrative,—in the discursive and descriptive,—than in the dramatic. For this department of art, his mental nature does not seem sufficiently flexible, nor his mode of utterance sufficiently direct. His style is diffuse and elaborate, when it should be concentra-

tive, and he leaves nothing to the doubts and apprehensions of the spectator. It is the great characteristic of poetry in general, and the drama in especial, that language should be suggestive rather than full. Something must be left to the imagination of the audience. The clue must be put into their own hands, and they left to follow it; and it is because of the actual part which they thus are made to take in the progress of events, that the drama forms an intellectual exercise much more exciting than any other which mortal genius has yet been able to conceive. The spectators are, themselves, to a certain extent, participators in the scene. Their fears and hopes are awakened. They know not what is next to come. They feel the danger that they but behold, and tremble with personal expectation, which crowns with reality, and makes perfect and true, the illusion which is in progress before them. Where a writer leaves nothing to his audience to conjecture,—nay, where, by completing the tableau of his thoughts, he leaves nothing for the actor,—he will scarcely succeed in dramatic writing. Mr. Mathews writes his play more like a critic than a dramatist. His characters do not speak to events, but to one another. They relate long stories. They canvass ordinary matter of speculation. They are, in short, all of them, more or less political satirists and essayists.

The next work in this collection, to which our attention is drawn, is that, we suspect, upon which our author has expended most time and labour. It does not follow from this, however, that it is his work of greatest excellences. This is "The Career of Puffer Hopkins,"—a story of satirical character. The production is entirely too long, as a first objection. This defect is somewhat due to the too great diffuseness of our author's writings, and, perhaps, still more to the manner in which it was originally printed, by piecemeal, in the pages of a periodical. "Arcturus" was a New York magazine, of which our author was one of the editors. It is due to this journal, to say that it deserved to have been successful. We have been at some pains to procure the volumes which were published, and we find them distinguished by some of the very best characteristics of review or magazine. The tone of it was earnest and thoughtful,—the temper was good, the views indicated equal sincerity and originality,—qualities

which, though of the very last importance to a whole some periodical literature,—particularly to its criticism,—are yet most usually the very last to be found in our periodicals. It is in the pages of this journal that we find the most imposing proofs of the general ability of our author. Here appeared his "Wakondah" —not to speak of sundry articles equally marked by good writing and thinking, originality of suggestion, pith and nerve of expression, and not a little of the picturesque and poetic. The papers on "Political Life," "Citizenship," "Every Fourth Year," "The School Fund," etc., are all thoughtful and statesmanlike essays. We are inclined to regard them, with the exception of one or two pieces, as the very best from the author's pen. The lighter and livelier articles in the same collection, are piquant and fanciful. The views on Copyright and Literature, partake of the better characteristics of the former. They denote an elevated ideal in the author, which a corresponding power of reasoning enables him to sustain with ease and dignity. But these have already had our notice.

In the papers of the "Motley Book," and several of those which occur towards the close of the volume, there is much pleasant and some judicious trifling. We might instance as a clever specimen of this class, "The New Ethics of Eating," which appeared in the New-York Review. The "True Aims of Life," delivered before the Alumni of the New York University, is a thoughtful and sensible discourse,—not profound, but healthful,—and of that clear, transparent nature, mingling the practical with the elevated, by which the actual is lifted by insensible progress to a pleasant communion with the ideal. We do not incline to the sort of essay, of which "Jeduthan Hobbs," and "the late Ben Smith, loafer," are sufficient samples. They are no doubt well enough in the pages of the light and flashy periodicals; but they neither represent the true endowments of our author, nor do credit to his fame. As very early productions, they are proofs, certainly, of considerable cleverness. There is one essay, from the writings in "Arcturus," entitled the "Unrest of the Age," which struck us as true in conception and sentiment, some portions of which, as giving a very fair idea of the better style and manner of our author, we had marked for quota-

tion, but which our present limits warn us to exclude. We are compelled to pass without notice numerous passages, among the miscellanies of our author, distinguished by a contemplative mind, a gentle tone and graceful fancy, and must hurry on to larger, even if less attractive game. We frankly avow that we look upon "The Career of Puffer Hopkins," as a sad instance of perverted talent. We cannot but doubt that it has done or will do any thing for the reputation of the writer. That it has been successful, as we learn, has been owing, we are disposed to think, to the passion for whatever is outré, or ridiculous, or merely extravagant,—among the unthinking classes,—people who read against time and sleep,—and as if to prove, by this sort of industry, that they are not absolutely of

"that fat weed,
That hugs itself at ease, by Lethe's wharf."

We are to ask not in what degree, or with whom, this book finds favour, but what are its claims to be successful. Let us first notice the manner in which this production has been written. These weekly or monthly issues, is a mode of publication very apt to lessen the excellence of a conception, and to diminish or impair its proportions. There is something decidedly unfriendly to art, in the present popular mode of writing for *serial* publication. The reader reads but for the momentary satisfaction, and the writer contemplates nothing more than to afford this inferior pleasure. The motives to composition are not sufficiently noble. The impulse to art not sufficiently critical and coercive. The author soon becomes indifferent to all general proportions in his work,—to all symmetry of outline,—all compactness of plan and execution. He uses irrelevant matter,—forgets or neglects his main purpose,—yields to frequent changes of plan,—to frequent weariness,—and, satisfied in the preparation of a few spirited sketches, such as may keep attention wakeful,—becomes heartily indifferent to consistency of tone, harmony of parts and colour, uniformity of execution, or appropriate finish and denouement. The winding up of plots, framed in this manner, is usually feeble and defective. From this objection, the works of even the most successful of the periodical tale writers are not exempt. It is the fault of the whole tribe,—Dickens, Ainsworth, and the

rest. We do not see that Mr. Mathews has been any more fortunate. His story is desultory and purposeless,—much of it seemingly without a plan,—as if, contemplating but the immediate sketch or scene before him, the author had gone on writing at every sitting,—satisfied with what was in progress, without regarding with much concern its bearing upon, or general connection with, the rest. That there is a connection we admit; but it is not of vital threads or interests. It cannot be denied that several of these scenes, considered by themselves, are decidedly happy,—are conceived in the true spirit of humanity, and carried out to fortunate conclusions of art. We could show some of them drawn with no little tragic force,—marked by pathetic or humorous interest,—touched with delicacy, and, whether grave or gay, proving the capacity of the author to be worthy, in good training, to execute many of the boldest of his conceptions. We had marked some of these episodes—for they are such—for extract, but we are already in a fair way to trespass too greatly upon the attention of the reader. "The vision of the coffin-maker's apprentice," though somewhat rude, is yet a bold freak of imaginative performance,—calculated to compel reflection, and to open the eyes of the moralist to all sorts of anomalies in society. Of this sort are many others of the grave grotesques of Mr. Mathews,—and, in such odd, but striking delineations, he is frequently found to excel. Detached from the rest of the story, such episodes speak imposingly to the thoughts. We complain that they are not happily grafted on the growth that bears them,—a defect which is due to that mode of breaking a consecutive narrative into periodical parts,—a practice which cannot but impair the design and consistency of a work of art, leaving it incongruous, halting and indefinite.

There are two radical objections to the "Career of Puffer Hopkins." The first is one already somewhat indicated in our remarks upon the comedy of "The Politicians." Puffer Hopkins is, in fact, another comedy of "Politicians." The material in both works is, in some degree, drawn from the same sources, and the characters are both on the same uniform level. They are as little idealized in "Puffer Hopkins" as in "the Politicians." They work very much on a common platform of unmitigated coarse-

ness. The humble in position are not pure in purpose or delicate in sentiment, and the wealthy or imposing are neither high-souled nor generous. The very names in the one work, as in the other, are suggestive of the uniform inferiority, if not vulgarity, of the characters. Thus, the hero is "Puffer Hopkins," and the chief auxiliaries are "Hobbleshanks," "Fishblatts," "Crumps," "Blinkers," "Punchwinds," "Fobs," "Smalls," "Foils," "Finches," "Cutbills," "Bluffs," "Gallipots," "Shirks," and "Bloaters."

Why such names? Are they suggestive either of wit or of society? Are they suggestive of character? It is the error of Mr. Mathews to make them commonly so. Mr. Dickens falls into the folly of employing a like nomenclature; but he steers clear of the further error of making it significant of the morals and manners of his dramatis personæ. He is prudent enough to confound the senseless exaggeration by idealizing the character that bears the name. The error is due to a like exaggeration with that which, in a sentimental age, provided the persons with names particularly rose-hued and lackadaisical. The "Nicklebys," and "Rudges," and "Twists," are natural antagonists to the Lovells, Savilles, and Mandevilles of a previous generation, and are just as legitimate. Mr. Dickens, though he confers unusual names upon his personages, does not employ such as convey absolutely vulgar suggestions of the character. He makes them outré, but not necessarily monstrous. We think him wrong, even as it is; for the nomenclature should represent the society in which the scene is laid, and should be as little suggestive of the peculiarities of the individual as names so found are possible to be. This is a rule in art known to the old writers. In modern times we have Walter Scott for authority, a nice tactician in such matters. He goes so far as to object that the general title of a work should convey any idea of the purpose or plot of the writer. But in this suggestion he was governed by the policy of the *raconteur*, simply, who knows how much of success is due to surprise, and who guards in this way against the discovery of his plan until he is ready with the denouement. But, so far as the naming of persons is concerned, the rule is a reasonable one. Look at the old English masters of comic fiction for something on this head. Take

Fielding, Smollett, and Goldsmith for authorities, as they are. Tom Jones, Squire Western, Blifil, Roderick Random, Thornhill, etc., are names of society, well chosen, simple, and expressive, conveying no more to the mind of the reader than the simple fact that he is among creatures of kith and kin. Be sure there is no small value in this suggestion. A novel writer, indeed, cannot do better than go to the "directory" for his dramatis personæ.

Our next objection to "Puffer Hopkins" is a more serious one. The work, though marked by sober and even pathetic parts, is yet, in its general tone, intended as a humorous one. Now, we are not prepared to regard the endowments of Mr. Mathews as particularly humorous. His various attempts in this way do not convince us that he is in possession of this quality, or, at least, that he holds it to any great extent. It certainly is not his *forte*. Comic fiction is evidently not his vein. He does not seem the man for picking up and portraying such materials as present themselves, lying confusedly upon the surface of social life. Whatever be the character of the less direct, the less grave portions of this story, it is assuredly not humour. It lacks ease, smoothness of transition, unaffectedness, for this. It is too stern, too sombre, too stiff and stately. The dignity and directness of the author's mood, seems to stand in the way of his persons. He makes them speak his language, as he usually thinks, rather than such as belongs to their own thoughts and situations. He makes them speak scorn and satire, when such persons are susceptible only to the ridiculous. They are simply the mouthpieces of the author; and there is a constant struggle between the position of the dramatis personæ and what is before them to do, and the higher and soberer thoughts which the former is compelling them to articulate. We do not deny that the material furnishes excellent staple for the humorous and the satiric, but it is one thing to bring it forth by means of the natural agents, and another to unfold it in the attributes of the stern censor in the chair of criticism. The ludicrousness is not allowed to show itself by means of its proper representatives. It is held up by the author himself—a man of keen, earnest, cynical mind—with a bitter chuckle, which is scorn rather than humour, to the hatred rather than the laughter of the species. We see the critic, but not the humorist. We see that

there are things and persons deserving of ridicule and laughter, but we do not laugh. The author holds the offender up to severer penalties. He says, "Laugh," it is true; but he says it in such a manner that we are more disposed to "lynch" the victim than to laugh at his situation.

We confess ourselves surprised that Mr. Mathews should incline to this species of writing. We cannot well conceive of a department of art, for which his peculiar endowments seem more entirely unfitted, and, but for his real excellence in other performances, such as we have already indicated, we should dismiss the present work from our sight without more consideration. That he is entirely ignorant of his rôle we hold to be beyond all question; and this, by the way, is a more important difficulty in the progress of a young beginner, than often enters into the imagination of the critic. To begin rightly is one of the great secrets of success. To know how, and to what objects, to apply one's strength, is essential to its due development. Thousands of authors, highly endowed, gifted with adequate vitality, are yet lost in the hurrying waters of oblivion, simply as they have wasted genius and resource in fruitless struggles after objects, which their peculiar talents have not fitted them to attain. They follow an impulse of society—they take for themselves an example from the crowd—receive a bias of will from the superior successes of another, and, without asking whether they individually resemble him in the qualities of temperament, taste, apprehension, and special impulse, they rush into the paths which he has wrought out for himself, and by himself only, and are lost in the vast shadow which his greatness casts behind him. That Mr. Mathews, young, eager, and inexperienced, has somewhat fallen into this error, seems to us very certain. Something of his misdirection may result, indeed, from the seeming necessities, and the unhappy and slavish relation in which our native literature stands to the foreign. Such are our critics, and such our publishers, and such our people, to this moment, that, to be successful in the popular meaning of that word, domestic literature must necessarily be a work of imitation. To be original, would be to offend critic, publisher and public, who are not easily persuaded of tracks yet to be hewn out by the hands of the pio-

neer, in letters as in forests. The American, whatever be his genius, must subdue, must hush its utterance, until, by showing that he can tread the same paths, successfully with the foreigner, he may venture unchallenged into some glorious outlawry of his own. The example and the good fortunes of the modern English writers of humour, have, we suspect, done more towards persuading our author into their provinces, than any natural tendency of his own mind. We do not say this in disparagement. We do not say that he is an imitator,—a mere follower in the path of a superior. Very far from this. But for the belief that Mr. Mathews is a man of really original endowment, destined yet to do honour to our literature, we should not expend a word upon him. But the temptation to enter fields in which success has recently been found, is but natural to the young and striving intellect. He may enter the same field, but may plough, and plant it after a fashion of his own. This is the fact in the present case. Mr. Mathews has too much real ability to be an imitator. We see this in spite of the painful difficulties which his subject seems to have imposed upon his talent. His book seems to betray, in every page, the proofs of a native and audacious mind struggling against self-rivetted fetters. Could he have been an imitator, this work would have been more successful. The material for a dozen volumes, like those of Dickens', is abundant in the characteristics of New York life. But success, except in the matter of money and for the moment, would have been but an inferior concern with an original mind. To succeed, after the fashion of Mr. Dickens, or any model, would be but a small achievement, the value of which may be understood by reference to the successes which, by merely imitative industry, Mr. James has secured in his pressing progress through the paths opened by Walter Scott.

We have already said that Mr. Mathews lacks one great essential of the successful imitator—mental flexibility. His independence stands in his own path. He will look aside from his model to his mind. His eyes turn inwardly, not without. Instead of following, he aims perpetually to lead. His thoughts and expressions come out of a mouth of their own, in spite of all his efforts to force them into that of other people. Hence, indeed, the phlegm and stiffness which distinguish his utterance—a

characteristic which is every where present in his humorous attempts,—and which we conceive to be singularly false as characteristic of his intellect. As an imitator of Dickens, we should say that he would be particularly unfortunate, and his failure would be the strict result of the strong and decided independence which marks his mind. This independence, would he obey it, would lead him to very different fields, and probably to not dissimilar degrees of success;—allowing all the while for the monstrous inferiority of opportunity in the cis-atlantic writer,—an inferiority which, we are compelled to fear, will survive the present generation. He lacks sundry of the attributes which are among the most prominent in the genius of Dickens,—that pliancy of mood for example, which we call mental flexibility, and which enables him to go out of himself, to forget himself, to forget his favourite thoughts and fancies, and to throw all the strength of his intellect into the *dramatis personæ* that grow under his hands. Shakspeare was, of all writers that have ever lived, the most perfect master of this faculty. Homer had it in large degree. Walter Scott stands next to Shakspeare in its possession. Milton wanted it,—so did Byron,—so does Bulwer. We might name others were it needful. The one class implicitly obey the laws inevitably accruing from the condition of the scheme before them,—follow out that scheme,—have no prejudices, no partialities,—take no sides in the controversy of which they simply report, and seem to subdue their own passions entirely, while giving breadth, strength and development to those of their characters. Milton, on the other hand, was a kingman,—of great executive will,—who impressed all persons with his own nature, and made all speak after the fashion of his own soul. He asked not after the fashion of the world, but he made the world after his own models. This is what the Germans call "one-sidedness," in opposition to "many-sidedness,"—a clumsy mode of expressing things which are yet left without a perfect definition. Our author labours under this "one-sidedness,"—which renders him unfit for dramatic writing. He has too much of the puritan temperament, which is unimpressible, rigid and dictatorial,—and all this is totally adverse to success in fields like those of Dickens. He lacks, also, as the natural consequence of an earnest, inflexible will, the same

capacity for patient observation,—the same keen zest for the queer, the quaint and the ridiculous,—which are leading traits in the constitution of the English writer. A fondness for exaggeration—which is equally significant of the imaginative faculty—is, as far as we are able to see, almost the only marked quality which these writers partake in common; yet, even in the developement of this quality, they are very unlike. Mathews is generally very serious and sarcastic in his exaggerations; Dickens is rather jocose and good-humoured. The one dilates in the sterner portions of his story,—the other rather hurries over these, and, in the sad and the pathetic, aims to be as simple and natural as possible. He has the advantage, in this respect, of the American, simply because of that inferior earnestness of mood, which permits of a proper division of his regard among all of his plans and personages.

In the intense directness of his own, Mr. Mathews is not an unfit representative of the American mind, which is serious, straightforward and impressive;—not content with being suggestive only,—never satisfied until it enforces, with sober argument and solid illustration, the subject which it proposes to teach. His tastes do not incline him, with the writer of whom we assume his designed imitation,—to "catch the living manners as they rise,"—to seize and bring together, in connection and odd contrast, as they severally occur, the thousand traits presented by the condition of low-life and pauperism. His genius is quite too despotic, for this. He is, we regret to think, from his writings, too little of the democrat—socially and politically. He generalizes with more ease than he details; groups rather than delineates. The nicer shades of humble character escape him,—those exquisitely slight hues, and fainter lines, which denote the transition from one mood or feeling to another, among a class of persons, who,—except when entirely freed from the restraining presence of their superiors,—speak and appear with the subdued voice and countenance of men for whom there is no social law, and whose social privileges are those of license rather than liberty. It is from a singular sympathy with this ordinary and inferior nature, that Mr. Dickens derives his material and his successes. He not only sees into its external condition,—how

it is fed, clothed, and comforted,—but he strives to pry into its inner world,—studiously and doubly hidden as it is, from the eye of the superior, by that stubborn pride which is the chief protection of the sensibilities of a denied or degraded caste. He looks closely to see how it thinks—how it feels—what are its hopes and fears—how it estimates the present—how it anticipates the future—what are its intellectual daily gains—if any; and what are its poor, despised moral trophies,—the little, creeping, insinuating aims and reachings,—the small, fond fancies,—the only half-hoping, and always hidden faith,—which, with the inferior condition, somewhat tend to elevate the lowly, soothe and soften the rough, and inform, though, perhaps, with only a transient beauty, the coarse and unintellectual. Dickens wins his way to their history through their sympathies. They unfold their condition because he seems to seek it, not because of his curiosity, but because of a real and friendly interest in their fortunes. He looks at them *through* their rags, and tells us of the warm heart, the pure spirit, the truly loving and sympathizing and yearning nature, which struggle and sigh for utterance below. Mr. Mathews employs a different process. He goes among the same people as a judge and critic, rather than a friend. It is not as the Howard, but as the *chef de police*, that he takes them in hand. He shows us the creature *in* his rags,—shows us his moral hatefulness,—points to his leprous spots,—makes us understand how much he is criminal, and does not always remember to show how much he has been suffering. Dickens, by that obvious sympathy with his subject, which is, after all, the best proof of a capacity for its treatment, lifts into our survey qualities of worth in the object, in which we have hitherto seen only qualities of crime and filth. Our *human* nature, under his counsel, gradually assimilates itself to its new acquaintance, and we rejoice to find that one whom we held before to be only deserving of our scorn, has really some of the strongest claims, as a being no less suffering than erring, upon our indulgence and affection. The toil of Mr. Mathews is less catholic. His labours, in "Puffer Hopkins,"—winnowed to their just results,—would tend to show that this was all wrong,—and that many to whom we had yielded our sympathies, were in reality only deserving our

scorn. This "one-sidedness" is not truthful. Man is a much better animal, in his worst rags, than we are inclined to think him; and the success of Dickens is due, in fact, to the dramatic manner in which he inculcates this truth. But this acknowledgment is made only to the least objectionable portion of this author's writings. The miserable moral and physical deformities which he sometimes offers us for men and women, are equally false to nature and revolting to art. It is in some of these less truthful compositions that Mr. Mathews makes his closest approximation to the foreign author. He does not seem to possess the finer tact of discriminating and selecting from his materials; nor is he able—whether from youth and inexperience, or because of a natural deficiency in this part of his intellectual organization,—to catch those softening and redeeming traits which are found in the worst of natures,—by which the roughest outlines are subdued, and brought within the lively naturalness of truth. The more prominent traits—the open expression—the master feeling, when it can no longer be suppressed—whether of rogue or ruffian—*parvenu* or pauper,—in his hands become prominent enough. *These* he can manage and delineate with force and spirit,—but we miss the under-strokes,—the softening shadows. The lines stand out sharply and angularly upon the canvass—in colours, dark, rude, wanting individuality. We see what is intended,—we recognize certain features and a partial truth;—but it is not the whole truth, and, for the faith we put in it, might as well be false. It is in drawings such as these, as in morals,—the partial fact being the most disparaging form of falsehood and misrepresentation.

We are told by the author, in his preface to "Puffer Hopkins," that his desire was to produce a work which should be national and characteristic in its features. It is difficult to say what he conceives to be national and characteristic. We really regard him as less so in "Puffer Hopkins," and "The Politicians," than in any other of his writings. Nationality is not shown in the slang words and proper names of party. The American people never look less certainly national, than in the times and business of an election. Undoubtedly, this is one of their features. It is one of their periods of excess. The moral

moods of the nation distinguish it. We see in it the national tendency to excess and hyperbole,—to recklessness and extravagance,—and the brutal rages of demeanour which we owe to our Anglo-Norman parentage. Our excitability, our eagerness, and earnestness, are shown in some of these phases,—but these give us but a partial glimpse of the national heart and countenance. Equally remarkable, certainly,—nay, much more remarkable,—is the calm into which we subside after the contest,—the good-humoured philosophy which consoles us for our defeats, and the elasticity with which we rise to renew the struggle, as hopeful and resolute as ever, whenever the tocsin of party sounds to the field. Then, there is our freedom from vindictiveness. Never was people less given to harbour malignant or unfriendly moods; and we might, had we space and leisure, designate a hundred characteristics which might very well be regarded, under the circumstances, as peculiarly national. It is, we think, the error of Mr. Mathews, to have written as one brought up in a particular school or party. He has imbibed the bias of a sect,—and that not a successful one,—and their prejudices constitute the staple of his satire. Satire it is—not description. His materials are due to partisan politics, rather than to his walks among the people. We fail to perceive in them a just and adequate development of the popular nature and necessities. His flings are at demagogues and parvenues,—at lying patriots and selfish pretenders—creatures of whom the number will always be great in due degree with the popular character of our institutions. He shows us the miserable arts, the low cunning, the wretched chicanery, the equal conceit and servility, with which these reptiles work themselves into power,—and, bating a too great and frequent exaggeration in the process, he certainly succeeds in giving us a striking and humiliating picture. His error sometimes is,—and by which the force of his satire is impaired,—in making the objects of party too excessively small and ridiculous, and the plans and projects too glaringly absurd, to leave success within the scope of probability; and the satire falls to the ground at times from overleaping itself. There is a nice line of demarcation, difficult to define, by which we know where the artifice ceases, and the absurdity begins. The ridiculous is an Al Sirat

—as narrow as that boundary which is supposed to separate the genius from the madman; and to make his way along this attenuated passage, is at once the greatest danger and the greatest triumph of the writer, whether his aim be the humorous or the sublime.

Of our resources of humour as a nation,—of our popular capacity for humour,—something may be said in this connection; for, to be truly successful as a humorous writer, one of the first pre-requisites is a close adherence to the absolute truths of society. Humorous writing is one of the most delicate difficulties of art,—requiring a keen and quick perception, a happy susceptibility of mood, a nice regard to details, and a felicitous distribution of light and shade, with a happy mixture of pleasing but contending opposites. The English cannot be considered an humorous people. They do not readily surrender themselves to fun. Care is at their elbows ever—they seldom forget his propinquity. Their capacity for humour is doubtful, if not certainly inferior. They are far too earnest a people for it. Their playfulness is like that of Behemoth. Their embrace leaves about the ribs of the subject, very much the sort of sensation which might be looked to follow that of the grisly bear of the Rocky Mountains. They sport like Leviathan, and their laughter —of course, we speak not of the aristocracy now—is something of a yell. He "who plays at bowls" with them, "may expect rubbers." Their wit is seldom innocuous. It breaks bones. They are serious in their fun,—indeed, it is something serious usually which makes them funny. The shows in which they most delight are brutal and bloodthirsty. Their jokes are horse-play, and of the kind called "practical." Even the humane Mr. Dickens derives many of his funny things from the mishaps and misfortunes of his neighbours,—and the amiable Mr. Pickwick is represented as supremely happy when he contributes to the prostration of his companion, at the cost of a broken head. in the sports of the ice-plain. We have but to study the organization of the Anglo-Saxon race, to find the source of these characteristics. The Saxon was a sullen slave—the Norman a fierce and sanguinary robber. The ordinary practices, the constant exercises, the familiar amusements of both races, were of a

savage and cruel character. The penalties of crime, of whatever degree, were written in blood. The progress of Christianity did not materially mitigate the natural temper of the people, and the introduction of the reformed religion was decidedly unfriendly to the meliorating influences to which the Roman Catholics gave countenance. Natural and becoming sports were forbidden, at the peril of life and limb. Oppressive restraints and barbarities controlled many of the popular practices, which were in themselves innocent and conducive to the softening of vulgar moods. Their laws were terribly vindictive. As a matter of course, their strifes were incessant with their oppressors. They encouraged, by their arms, one tyrant against another. A people of unbending will, the failure to escape their oppressors simply increased their ferocity. They cherished the hope of freedom with their hate of the despotism to which they sullenly succumbed. They yielded nothing without reluctance, and seized upon all possessions without scruple. Intensity, in all their moods, was the natural fruit of such a history. They were people of toils and trials, not of sports. Original endowment, constant invasions, civil wars without end, and a most unhappy familiarity with bloodshed, impressed the moral nature of the nation with a stern, fervid impregnableness of mood, which becomes conspicuous at a moment, and gives a dark and savage character even to their amusements. Hence the bloody and terrible character of their dramatic writings,—the awful passions which they developed,—the dreadful nature of the deeds to which they gave immortality. It is in their tragedy, indeed, rather than their comedy, that the genius of the nation exults and lives. It is to the writings of Milton and Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Marlowe, rather than those of Farquhar and Congreve, and Vanbrugh and Cibber, that the English trace their intellectual supremacy. And the successful writers and writings so preferred, are all earnest, intense, and tragic in their kind. This earnestness and severity is at the source of their national greatness,—of their liberties. They were a people, prepared by long training for high thoughts and achievements. But it cannot be denied that the effect has been evil upon the morals and manners of the mere multitude, who

have no means of partaking of the subduing and refining influences which modify these traits in the superior. The influence of the drama was great, in doing for the inferior classes what social advantages had done for the wealthy. But these influences, though softening and subduing, did not so radically affect the national mind as to endow it with qualities not originally possessed by the national genius. Of course, no well-balanced national mind can be entirely without humour as a natural constituent of character.

Down to the days of Cromwell, the period when America first became conspicuous as inviting British colonization—and we invite attention to this fact in the present connection—the English genius never made any very remarkable exhibitions of humour, at least in its prose fictions. What it has since displayed, has, indeed, been of a very superior order, as the names of Swift, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne, and Hogarth may be allowed to show. But these names are more conspicuous from their infrequency, and these names it is worthy of remark, with those of Congreve, Cibber, Farquhar, Defoe and many more, are names which followed the restoration of the Stuarts and the total overthrow of the Puritan influences, and we may add, with these, of many of the ancient English characteristics. Charles II. born in 1630, was restored in 1660. Defoe was born in 1661;—Swift, in 1667; Congreve, in 1670; Cibber, 1671; Addison, 1672; Farquhar, 1678; Hogarth, 1698; Fielding, 1707; Sterne, 1713; Smollett, in 1721, and Goldsmith in 1731.* We have but to continue the enumeration to our own day, and through various other classes of writers, to note, not only the natural merging of dramatic in prose fiction, but the gradual melioration of the national mood and temper, arising, we are permitted to assume, from the influence of other nations, the French and Dutch in particular, upon the social organization, which naturally followed upon the restoration of the Stuarts. We are also to note that this change could not be supposed to influence the temper and character of that puritanism which gave way before it, and which formed a large ingredient in the colonization of America. But if the temporary introduction of foreign influences, gave a new tone and direction to British genius,—and furnished it with a new

* See note A. p. 184.

characteristic, the traces of which still remain to our times, it does not appear that any thorough or radical alteration was affected in this respect in the national character of the people. A solitary writer, here and there, starting up with an exquisite faculty of humour, is not to be assumed as representing the tastes and frivolities of the nation. For these, the greater number of their writers still declare themselves in the language of seriousness and intensity. They still write better tragedy than comedy —are still more susceptible of the stately and the terrible, than of the merely fanciful and playful. They do not so much laugh as grin. It is the grotesque and the strange that moves them, rather than the humorous, and hence the extravagances and exaggerations of Mr. Dickens, when his labour is to be fanciful and funny. The English, as a people, have cheerfulness and strength—a hearty, healthy nature, in which a congenial moral and physique work wholesomely together, and produce a regular flow of spirits, and an equable and resolute mood, which enjoys the ludicrous without seeming to share in it, and can indulge in a frank expression of merriment, provided it is perfectly sure of those by whom it is surrounded. But we are very doubtful of its decided possession of, and susceptibility to, that peculiar quality of the mind, which, while it is quite too subtle for easy and satisfactory definition, everybody seems to understand by the term humour. Look at the generation of British poets now passing or just passed—great and wondrous in their several excellencies —surpassed, as a class by no preceding period—and see how certainly are they all true to what has ever been the great characteristics of the English nation—inflexibility, intensity,—the stately and the passionate—the thoughtful, the contemplative and spiritual. Byron and Shelley; Coleridge and Wordsworth; Southey and Campbell. These were the masters; the high priests of British literature, by which the nation swore, and not a humorist among them. Moore, a wit, but not a humorist; and Scott, a humorist in prose, but in his verse, true to the intense and eager nature of a thousand generations. With this single exception also, the prose fiction of the same period can assert few or no claims to the possession of the quality. With Scott it was tributary to characteristics more decidedly in

unison with the English temper. If he gives us Baillie Nicol Jarvie, he throws the preponderating weight of his tragic force, into the opposite scale in the characters of the Macgregor and his wife,—the high-spirited almost fierce Die Vernon, the savage Rashleigh, and the sentimental Francis Osbaldistone. If at one moment, he permits us to laugh over the oddly matched parties, when the blazing poker of the Baillie proves fatal, to the cloak at least of the terrified Highlander, he is prompt in making us forget the ridiculous, in the tragical execution of the gauger Morris by the hands of the terrible wife of the outlaw. The humour of Scott is always subservient to the tragedy—a foil rather than a constituent, as it is mostly in Shakspeare, and with but very few exceptions, with most of the English novelists. We have already drawn attention to the fact, that most of these novelists, thus distinguished, were the product of a particular era, and have good reason to infer that their tendencies were in very considerable degree derived from the influences of the continent. Their names are really exceptions in the extended literary history of the English, until we come down to our own times, when we find Charles Lamb, and a few others to whom we accord a certain degree of humour, yet whom we should scarcely presume to describe as humorous writers. The quaint and playful, in gentle combination, affords us in Lamb, a something of the quality, which a liberal definition may place within the category ; yet the humorsome in him is sometimes heavily laden with the pathetic. He is more apt to make you sad than merry. He tries to be pleasant for your sake, but you sigh rather than smile. The effect of his quaintnesses, dealing as he does, commonly, with touching memories, regrets, isolation and sad experiences, is necessarily saddening though you hear him laugh, with misgivings that you hear a sob now and then rising above his chuckle. His quality is a grateful one, though we must class it differently from his blind admirers. His happy faculty seems to consist in softening what is gloomy in itself, giving it the simpler tone of sadness, and by a gush of quaint effusion, barely preventing you from falling into melancholy musing. His most successful essays are more pathetic than humorous. We doubt, indeed, if any body rises from the perusal of this writer, and others, usually consid-

ered humorous, that might be named, without experiencing sentiments of the saddest and soberest complexion. Chaucer is accounted a humorous writer, but his humour is a very different thing from that which in our day receives this title. Chaucer is rather a robust and healthy exponent of the English nature in its least excited moments. He was a writer of society rather than of passions,—and preferred taking ordinary views of society to profound ones. In our day he would have written prose narratives, like those of Mr, Dickens, with better plots, less extravagance, and something less of the pathetic. But he would have been more true, as the representative of society in general. He was another of those catholic writers who would have forgotten himself in his character. The humour of his day was preserved to that of Smollett and Fielding, and became somewhat richer in them from the grafting of foreign attributes. In them, it grew naturally out of the situation,—was unstrained,—the result of the regular progress of events, and not of cunning contrivances, merely set in operation to provoke the cachinnation of the reader. If the fun came, well and good, they set it down as it accrued to them. They never called for it. It was the spontaneous effusion of a faculty in themselves, and in the character and the event upon which they were engaged,—and the action of circumstances upon character, gave form and effect to the situation. Nothing was derived from mere quaintness of expression, peculiarity of phrase, or oddly-sorted phraseology. The thing, as we encounter it now-a-days, is of different fashion, and if deserving of the name of humour, is certainly of a far inferior quality. We are made to laugh now by what is simply queer or ridiculous,—by the grotesque and impossible,—by a nomenclature that seems to task the writer's ingenuity much more than his plot, and by the worst of manners, shown up in the strangest of situations. Mere fun is now the object; yet we take it for granted that no reader, perusing the great masters of the humorous, would suspect them for a single moment of a labour at any such effect. Life as it was,—a speaking, being, doing and suffering, not an automaton life,—seems to have been their purpose. Now-a-days your book of humour seems manufactured only for the fun, as the monkey is dressed in red, with cap and cockade, and attended

by kettle-drum or banjo, is set to perform at the corners of the highway for the amusement of the thoughtless boy, or the inconsiderate, half-starved ignorant. The purposes for which the separate authors wrote, seem to be entirely different, and the difference of humour between them is quite as evident.

But to return. Sprung from the same stock, the American cannot materially differ from his ancestor. He is like unto the Englishman; but it is the Englishman of the days of the Protectorate. He partook none of those foreign qualities which came with the restoration. This exception made, and he shares in all substantial respects, in the character of the Briton. He has his inflexibility of purpose, his jealousy of others, his keen, suspicious sense of liberty, his earnestness, and his profound faith in himself. He has the same warm and violent passions,—the same intensity of mood,—the same tendency to the sanguinary and the violent. The events which have modified the English character in America, have not always tended to its improvement—have not, certainly, rendered it more susceptible to the influences of humour. In the colder clime of New-England, labouring under the adverse influences of inclement skies, and sterile soil, the intensity of the Puritan nature became rather increased than diminished, even while seeming, for a season at least, more humble and subdued. Prosperity has not, to this day, subdued the earnest and irascible in its character. Subjected to novel necessities, severe trials and conflicts, and strange encounters in the new world, English character was somewhat drawn out, and became more flexible, more susceptible of adaptation to various uses, than in Europe. With more levity than his ancestor, the American has really no more humour. Our vanity produces more flippancy,—we talk with more freedom, and attempt all sorts of smart things in what we say; but our attempts at the humorous are usually wretched enough. We are scarcely sensible to the humorous. Broad farce and lamentable caricature suffice us. Look at our newspapers for example—filled as they are with a *mêlange*, over which the presiding spirit shows itself as reckless ordinarily of decency as it is of taste,—and what is the sort of humour which is there offered us? What is it but dashing effrontery, insolent blackguardism, bold imperti-

nence, or a fun that is equally silly and deplorable? Our wit consists in odd analogies, strained metaphors, hyperbole beyond grasp, and absurdities that seem to delight, on the part of their makers, like Mawworm in the play, in being utterly contemptible. Sift it, sort it, compare it,—and to this one measure it will come at last. The wretched workmen who engage in these day labours, draw their waters in a sieve. All is stale, flat, and unprofitable. And, for the elaborate efforts at humour in our prose fiction;—here, for example, is the work now under our hands. It is advertised as a humorous production; and so described by half the newspaper critics in the country. A more lamentable mistake on the part of author and critic was never made—a mistake more decidedly injurious to the author than to any other person. But, we are told of Paulding and Irving, of Sands and Kennedy; but these are writers of pleasantry, rather than humour. Sands was something of a droll, quizzically inclined, with a spice of satire in his composition, but nothing farther. Paulding's humour, when he makes a very serious effort, compels no man's merriment. He is more successful in his least ambitious efforts, and, with Irving, may be placed in the same list with Addison—who was a writer of gentlemanly pleasantries—who told his story, a graceful, pleasant narrative, with the air of a gentleman presiding at the dinner table, solicitous while doing the honours and making every thing agreeable, not to suffer himself to fall into any merriment which could derange the quiet order of his company. We are not familiar with the writings of Mr. Neal, of Philadelphia, who is spoken of as a fellow of infinite jest, and there are other writers of professed and published humour among us of whom we regret while hearing much to know so little. The fault is not theirs, and the misfortune ours. Decidedly, the best specimens of American humour which are known to us, are contained in the Georgia Scenes of Judge Longstreet—specimens, we make bold to say, quite equal, of their kind, to any thing from the hands of the modern English. You hear much said of Jack Downing, and even the British press found something to please them in this clever *jeu d'esprit*. But Jack Downing was satirical rather than humorous. His caricatures, except at a time of intense political excitement, would

scarcely have provoked a smile; and now that the struggle which provoked it is at rest, the letters of Jack Downing are as effectually buried from sight as if they were sealed up in the catacombs of Egypt. Their success—aside from the demands of party—lay in their excessive grotesques, and the brunt of face with which the writer could insist upon the impossible.

In humorous poetry, we have nothing better than Halleck's "Fanny,"—which is merely a lively local picture, the humour of which is exceeding faint and characterless. It has never found much favour out of the corporate limits of New-York. As for our taste and skill in caricature, it is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more uniformly and thoroughly wretched and ridiculous,—more stupid, less expressive, and less likely to arouse the cachinnatory muscles of any, even among the most blank-witted and thick-headed of the vulgar,—than the draughts of political allegory, which exult in lithographic costume, at the corners of the highway, just on the eve of each popular election. Even that insect tribe, which rejoices in the euphonious names of "Phiz" and "Biz" and "Quiz"—and with the feeble extravagances of which, our brother Bull seems so perfectly satisfied—have as yet failed to find any worthy successors among us. We cannot call to mind a single painter, who has yet, in our country, addressed his attention to subjects at all humorous. Our Hogarths have yet made no sign. And thus stands the case in all departments. Our published humour is a blank. Yet there is humour in the country—rare, racy, articulate, native humour. We have spoken of the Georgia Scenes of Judge Longstreet. Unquestionably, far beyond any comparison, they are the best specimens in this field that the American genius has produced; and that they spring from this region—a region which, as yet, has put in no claim to the regards of the nation, in a literary point of view, leads to reflections of some significance. Our publishing press is established in places having intimate intercourse with Europe. New-York, Boston, and Philadelphia, from which cities all our literature emanates, are more or less under the immediate control and direction of European mind. In the same degree are they denuded of originality; and we must look elsewhere, to regions free, if possible,

from this paralyzing influence, for whatever nationality our literature is destined to possess. If we look in the right direction, we shall not always look in vain: and, as perfect originality is, by reason of the very nature of humour, one of its most absolutely necessary constituents, our eyes must necessarily turn in that quarter in which the latter property is already most conspicuous. It is not now found in those regions, where every facility is already afforded for its utterance, if it there existed. You will find it stretching downwards, however, from the great back-bone, the central ridge of the country, following the course of its waters along the slopes of the western and south-western valleys. There grows a hardy and a generous nature, untaught, unsophisticated, warm, ardent, and impetuous, which is yet destined to unfold great histories in art and literature for the country which it endows. It is an original and vigorous nature, rough but rich, illiterate but fresh,—full of virgin glow and enthusiasm,—yearning after great things, and impetuous in their attainment. As yet it does not conceive its own endowments. Busy in the most laborious toils, striving against merely physical necessities,—it has yet an infinite deal to learn and to overcome, before it can possibly enter upon the nobler work of creating and refining in the empire of art. But it betrays signs of intellectual prowess in numerous departments, which the prescient philosopher cannot easily mistake. Eloquence born of noble and daring impulses,—enthusiasm which already declares a proud faith in its own destiny,—and thought and speculation which do not shrink from any difficulties, already speak for its possessions, and are so many shows of the power still in reserve. And in the buoyant life and animation of its speech,—in its copious fund of expression,—in the audacity of its illustration,—its very hyperbole,—the singular force of its analogies,—the pregnant, though ludicrous vitality of its pictures,—its queer allusions, sudden repartee, and lively adaptation of the foreign and unexpected to the familiar,—we recognise the presence of a genius as likely to embody the humorous as the eloquent,—the mirthful and the picturesque, as the sublime and the imposing. The nature of the people of this region lacks the rigidity, the solemnity, the staid forms and exactions of the people on the slopes

of the Atlantic. Their destiny has been more fertile, more fruitful, cast in more pleasant times, less influenced by English characteristics, and the gloomy dispensations of colonial necessity. They are, in truth, a native people, children of the soil and sun,—marked by their common characteristics: great vivacity, a clear spirit, a quick, impulsive temperament,—capricious, it may be, but oh! how buoyant,—how elastic,—how free from those morbid depressions which, for so many seasons of the day and year, impair the energies of the Englishman, and fetter his best faculties. It is needless to add, that, though our expectations of this sort are not large, we do not despair of seeing American writers of humour worthy to take rank with the European. All that we shall say just now is, that we have not found them yet.

But humour is not necessarily the constituent of a national performance. No!—by no means. It is a very good element to give relief to the mass, but may, in certain classes of writings, be dispensed with. We may not say what should constitute a national writer, but this we do say, that he who shall succeed in illustrating the nation, must make his leading idea a full acknowledgment of the impetuous and intense earnestness of the people,—an intenseness that seems to madden upon each successive topic, and runs headlong in the prosecution of every novel purpose. With this idea in mind,—the condition of the country,—the employments of the people,—their expectations and denials,—the events in their history,—all furnish abundant materials for illustration. But the fiction must partake of all the usual elements of fiction; must delineate society at large,—take in all its aspects,—not suffering any but that one to preponderate which gives tone and colour to the whole,—in which the whole people share alike, and in which they must all sympathize,—the eager, earnest, excitable nature, all impulse and enthusiasm, which declares itself in every movement of the national will and intellect. Such a people has little humour. They are too serious for it. They have no time for it. They are in action—neither given to dallying or trifling with the subject,—never loitering, never playing by the way. The goal is ever before their eyes, and their march is ever onward. Forming their ideas from our literature

rather than our progress, European writers speak lightly of our imagination. Our imagination is perhaps one of the most marvellous of our national developments, but it displays itself in action rather than in contemplation. The necessities of the nation impel it in a direction remote from literature. It is exhausted in physical and mechanical discoveries,—in a constant conflict with external nature,—in the fierce struggles of the politician,—in extravagant metaphor, and still more extravagant conception. How daring are all our schemes of wealth, conquest, aggrandizement. How remarkable our discoveries in science. How impetuous are we in the prosecution of them—how impatient of delay—how little desponding—how little given to hesitancy and doubt. But for the wondrous resources of imagination which we possess, we had been nothing. A plodding, dull and cautious race, without great hope and audacity, would have never traversed our forests with steam, and ascended with fire-driven barges the rapids of our mighty rivers. We may not have written a great poem, but our history itself is one of the most magnificent of epics; and our progress to independence and strength, a mighty marvel, worthy to be chronicled in the same page which records the glorious conception of Christopher Columbus.

Of such a people you may make a thousand stories, but you cannot make them ridiculous. Undoubtedly, the American mind, forever strained and forever straining at conquest or effect, hangs ever on the verge equally of the absurd and the sublime. Our vanity, which hurries us onward to frequent impropriety, is the natural foible of every young and ambitious people. It is the modification, which necessity and our own colonial condition effected in that character, which, in the Englishman, receives and deserves the name of arrogance. This quality in the American, which is so annoying to the *amour propre* of John Ox, is at the bottom of all those practices which are really ridiculous in our national deportment,—which prompts us to shows beyond our resources, and a pretension which, in truth, mocks our actual condition. It is the natural impulse of a people setting up for themselves, and now rising for the first time into the higher forms of social organization. This "high life below stairs," is undoubtedly good matter for farce and satire wherever it occurs,

—but it is also no less a proof that civilization is making advances. However ludicrous in its simple aspect, it is yet a sign of social progress,—not to be disregarded or held in contempt,—though properly deserving of rebuke,—by those who see in it the manifestations of a love of approbation,—the secret (par parenthese) of all our amiability,—a desire for improvement and for fame, which, working together, will be always likely to realize their object. The topics of scornful satire which our daily progress suggests to the spectator, are numerous enough. There are vices to be scourged,—we have made fearful progress in the last ten years;—follies to be censured,—phrenzies to be chastened and prevented;—but really, after all, there is little material for the humorist. The American people, vain and seeking praise, are particularly sensitive to ridicule,—constantly on the watch to escape it, and, however rash in politics or in enterprise, singularly cautious of their bearing in all that concerns society. Where they err in this respect, they do so from ignorance. But they soon learn; and one solecism in good manners, of which they are almost as soon conscious as their neighbours, saves them from a second. If their absurdities be in politics, it is still not so easy to laugh at those who rule successfully even while they blunder. The very idea of a whole nation mingling with the subject matter, however ridiculous, seems to invest it with a sort of dignity, which is apt to blunt the severities of satire, and to disarm wit and humour of half their powers. The very vanity of the nation, which, with all your power, you have utterly failed to subdue, and in which your unconcealed fears acknowledge the rival and competitor, has in it something which is wondrously inposing. With all blunders, and follies, and extravagances, you must respect that genius which baffles your own. You may hate and mock, as the English did, when the *sans culottes* of France, in the first desperate ebullition of their liberties, threw down the gauntlet to the whole world of European despotism; but whether you would or no, you must still respect and fear. From its masses, so circumstanced in power, so striving, with such rare energy, and struggling with success against such rare difficulties, you may more easily gather stuff for the tragic than the comic, as Dickens found in his cruise among us for materials.

Never did poor author strive harder, and with so little profit, to make a humorous volume from his slender stock. You may show such a people up to detestation, but not to ridicule; it is easier to misunderstand than to portray them. Even the excesses and the extravagances of party, afford little for the humorous. Cutting sarcasm may confound the demagogue, but you cannot with propriety laugh at him or his victims. The picture, best or worst, in all its phases, is too serious, if not too terrible, for laughter. A great, blinded, struggling people, seeking the right,—toiling day and night in its attainment, and misled by those in whom they confide,—is a picture to wound, to awe, to confound,—to make one sad, to make one weep, but hardly, with any propriety, to make one laugh. And, whatever there is of the ludicrous in the picture of a simple, ignorant man, in his cellar, striving to be a politician after the fashion of his ward,—cobbling shoes and discussing principles together,—still, the craving of his soul commands such respect, that the thoughtful mind must needs humour his appetite. Besides, there is truth in the philosophy which teaches, that where the soul of man honestly seeks the truth,—the truth, such as will suit his condition and endowment, must infallibly come to compensate his search.

Let us not be misunderstood. Though we protest against that artist who proposes a national picture out of what is simply ridiculous or loathsome in our society, we are yet fully of the opinion that rare works may be fashioned out of our domestic materials —the even current of every-day life—its small hopes, its petty distresses, its low wants, its humiliating denials. The skilful genius, who shall be patient enough in the search, will be at no loss for such materials, particularly in a city of such resources and such necessities as New York. Nor need the inquiry be one of much difficulty or delay. We regard the American people as being more easily delineated by the moral artist, than any of the European nations. They have fewer reserves. Their characteristics lie more upon the surface. They think aloud. They act in communities, and their usual recklessness of impulse as effectually betrays the inner nature, as frequent potations of new wine might do. In this particular, they are as prompt and impetuous as the Irishman; and the circumstances of their condi-

tion being one of singular progress and prosperity, render them—in spite of their English origin—as little heedful of the future and of consequences, as ever was any, the wretchedest sans-potato in green Erin. Vain, audacious, good-natured, bold,—not so frank as forward,—not so wise as ready,—the American is a compound of qualities easy to be traced to their sources, easy to be analyzed in their properties, and of a quality and strength amply to reward the ingenuity which would enter upon the honest delineation of his moral nature. But, hopefully to undertake such a task, the analyst must overlook the narrow prejudices and small barriers opposed by his own local connection with castes and parties. He must not suffer his personal moods to interfere with those which belong to him as an artist. The satirist may scourge a popular vice, but he is never the person to draw a national picture; and the author who shall ask who is whig and who democrat, among the persons who sit to him for portraits, will most probably place a deformity upon his canvass, which truth, nature, and all parties, must equally repudiate.

Note A.—The very enumeration of the names of *British* writers of humour, is conclusive as to *English* deficiencies. Swift, Smollett, Scott, Fielding, Sterne, Goldsmith, Farquhar, Congreve, &c.,—all either Irish or Scotch, suggests other considerations by which the leading views of this paper are sustainable. We leave the reader to pursue the inquiry at his leisure.

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